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NEW STATESMAN

Mark Kidel: disco music

RHODESIA: the war goes on

British bankers & the tanker fraud/ India: Gandhi holds the ring
The death of the British car industry?
Anthony Quinton: further Chomsky tremors
A.S. Byatt: George Eliot's letters/ Russell Davies: Newnham girls

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Contents

222 **Notes**
224 **Iran:** Fred Halliday
Good times for the rich: Frank Field
225 **The British bank and the Norwegian magnate:** *Duncan Campbell & Blaine* Stothard
226 **Who is killing ETA?:** Julie Flint
227 **How to save the car industry:** Michael Meacher
228 **Oilgate Notebook:** Martin Bailey
230 **Will Britain do the decent thing on Rhodesia?:** Christopher Hitchens
232 **If Thatcher doesn't get Rhodesia, famine will:** Diana Seager
234 **Charities and the politics of poverty:** Christopher Price
235 **London Diary:** John Mortimer
236 **Letters**
238 **Arthur Marshall & Roger Woddis**
Cover photos: AP, Camera Press

Books & Arts

239 **George Eliot's Letters:** A. S. Byatt
240 **Chomsky's Politics:** Anthony Quinton
242 **Newnham Girls:** Russell Davies
243 **Fiction:** Nicholas Shrimpton
244 **The Printing Revolution:** Denys Hay
245 **Disco Music:** Mark Kidel
246 **Theatre:** John Arden
247 **Television:** Julian Barnes
247 **Sport:** Russell Davies
248 **Jazz:** Charles Fox
249 **Films:** John Coleman
249 **Dance:** Bryan Robertson
250 **Weekend Competition and Crossword**
Poem by Christopher Reid

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Will Thatcher exile British women?

THE TORY GOVERNMENT will shortly attempt to fulfil its election pledge to control immigration by 'ending the concession introduced by the Labour government in 1974 to husbands and male fiancés'. If it succeeds, British women who marry foreigners in future will have to choose between living in Britain apart from their husbands or leaving their homes, families, friends and jobs to join them abroad. This will be done by the party which pledged itself to defend the family, and whose spokesman on social services, Patrick Jenkin, announced last year: "The concept of "family" lies at the core of our nature and is deeply embedded in the fabric of our society.' The rule change will affect all marriages to foreign men, except where the husband is able to settle in Britain in his own right. Thus, if a woman marries a French man or a German, she will be able to stay here with him, because EEC nationals are free to live and work in Britain. The same will be true if she marries a man with 'patrial' status (mainly Commonwealth citizens with a British-born parent). But if she marries a Turk, for example, or a Norwegian, or an African, Asian, Australian or American without 'patrial' status, she must make the agonising choice. British men, meanwhile, will remain free to import wives and fiancées from any part of the world they like.

Despite the obvious inhumanity of this measure and the blatant sex discrimination it entails, the government will not find it hard to introduce. There will be no need to publish a White Paper or pilot a Bill through Parliament: the Home Secretary can simply introduce a statutory instrument – and that cannot be reversed unless MPs table a 'prayer' against it within 40 days and then persuade a majority in Parliament to vote on their side. Many people, including a number of MPs, have made the mistaken (and racist) assumption that it is not worth opposing as it will only affect Asian girls with arranged marriages.

Last year 9,331 foreign husbands were allowed to settle in Britain and rather more of them were white than black. Altogether, there were 4,558 from the Indian sub-continent, Africa and South America and the West Indies; and 4,773 from elsewhere, including 1,722 from Europe, 980 from Australasia and 749 from North America. The Equal Opportunities Commission points out that far fewer husbands come to Britain than wives. From 1975 to 1978, a total of 37,183 husbands and 76,457 wives were admitted.

But it would be dangerous to allow these arguments to dominate a campaign against the rule change. For the real motive of the government is undoubtedly racist. If it could avoid penalising white women it surely would. The word inside the Home Office is that Thatcher is determined to nip in the bud the only remaining source of primary immigration from the Indian sub-continent: while second-generation Indians have been of marriagable age for some time, second-generation Pakistanis (whose parents immigrated later) are only just beginning to reach that stage and Bangladeshis are younger still. It is the marriage of these younger Asian girls to men from Pakistan and Bangladesh that the government wants to prevent.

If they could introduce a measure to achieve just that, they would. But they have found it necessary in the past to claim that they operate a non-racist immigration policy and their election manifesto announced (on the same page as the proposed rule change) that 'The rights of all British citizens legally settled here are equal before the law whatever their race, colour or creed'. Their only option is therefore to introduce a blanket measure applying to all women. They are trying to dress it in the cleanest possible garb by talking in terms of revoking a 'concession' introduced by Labour. Prior to 1969, British women married to foreigners had always had the right to stay in this country with their husbands. The Tories are in fact planning to reinstate a rule which was in force for only five years and which was revoked when it was recognised to be racially discriminatory in its intention and sex discriminatory in its effect. They must not be allowed to do so.

NOTES

Where the health service will suffer

Brian Slocock writes: Before taking their now historic decision to reject Government demands for cuts in their spending, the Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham area Health Authority commissioned a review of possible savings from each of its District Management Teams (DMTs). The results horrified the Authority. But they found favour with Mr Gerard Vaughan, Minister of State for Health, who described them as 'a reasonable basis for proceeding' and urged that they 'be approved by the AHA'. There is thus every reason to expect that the DMT reports will serve as the basis for the programme of cuts that the DHSS will eventually impose.

The first part of the DMT proposals are essentially trimming operations. One district suggested warning staff to wear warmer clothing so that heating can be restricted, and converting to spray taps to conserve water (the latter necessitating a publicity campaign to prevent uncomprehending staff turning the new taps on harder – thus rendering its putative saving rather unpredictable). The same district has already implemented a policy of controlling food allocations to patients to eliminate waste.

One principal target is pharmacy costs. However, attempts to skimp on the use of essential but expensive drugs can be highly counter-productive. One DMT noted that penny-pinching of this kind had led to a number of expensive (not to say painful) kidney transplants having to be carried out twice. Another proposal is to discharge patients on drug regimes early in order to transfer the cost of their therapy on to other areas of the NHS.

Rate rumpus rerun?

Christopher Hird writes: So far there is little evidence that the building societies need to raise their mortgage rate next year, despite press reports of 'a growing conviction' among building society bosses that they will. Last month the building societies lent out £846 million compared with a net inflow of deposits of £229 million. However, again contrary to some press reports, this did not mean they had to draw 'fairly heavily' on their liquid resources. The repayment of capital on outstanding mortgages and

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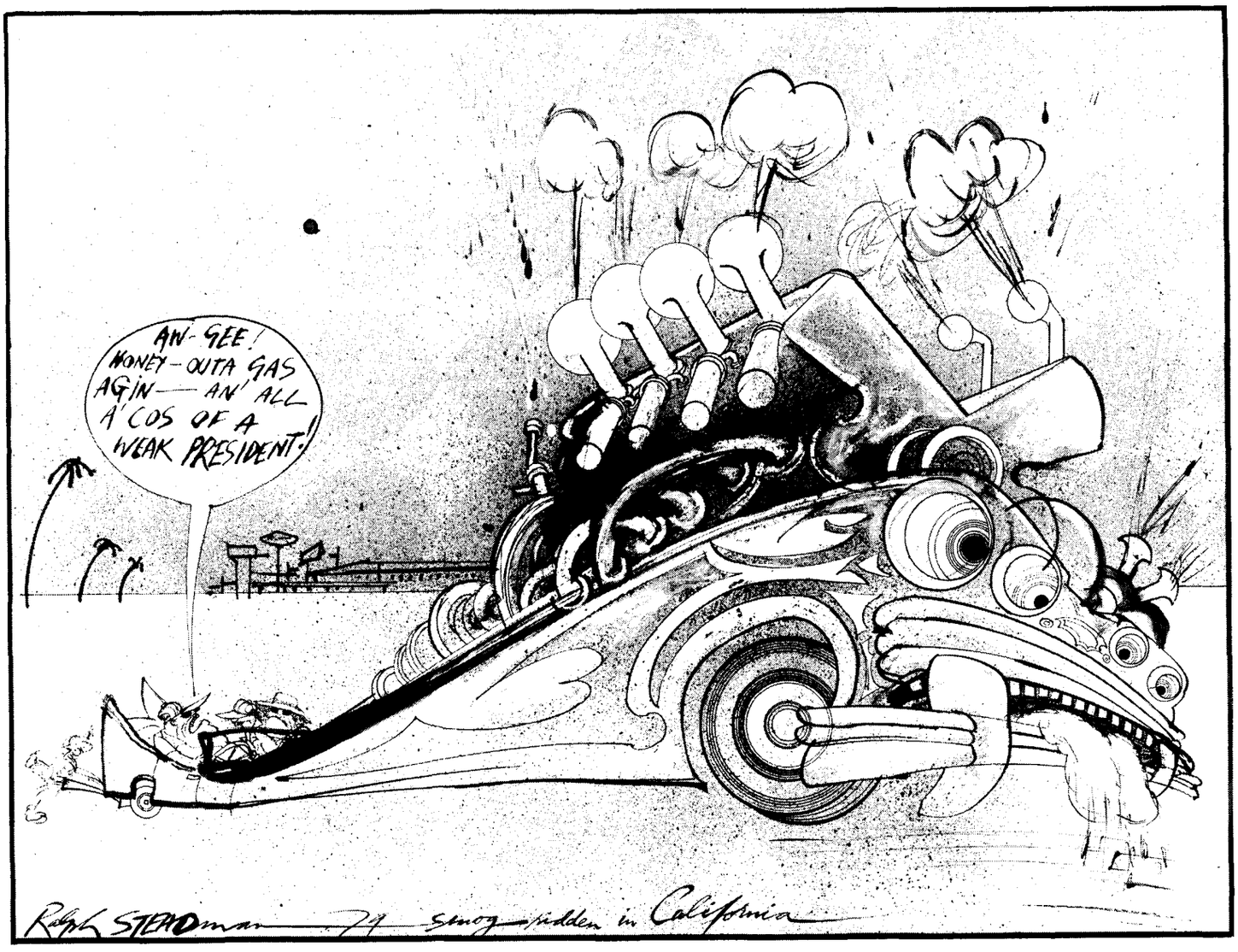

the crediting of interest to savings accounts meant that they had only to draw something like £50 million from their liquid funds of some £6,800 million. From the beginning of this month the societies have been paying ¾% more to savers, but have held off increasing the mortgage rate until January. As a result, for the rest of this year, they expect to be able to maintain the current rate of lending, financed from their net inflow of funds, without drawing much on their liquidity. But as the value of their total assets is growing, the liquidity ratio (cash and investments as a percentage of total assets) will fall. Last month it fell by 0.2 percentage points to 17.0 per cent. At that rate, within ten months it will be 15 per cent – twice the legal minimum.

A second – and more serious – effect of last month's decision on interest rates has been to reduce the building societies' profits this year by about £30 million after tax to, on a conservative guess, £190 million. But this still means that the societies will keep an adequate level of reserves and they could probably operate for several months on a lower level of profits. Taking on the building societies is the only good thing Thatcher has done, and the best policy now would be to insist on them justifying *specifically* the level of profits they make and liquidity they keep, without allowing them to drift off into generalities.

Tories lose interest in microchips

Roger Darlington writes: There is now little doubt that Conservative Ministers do not share the enthusiasm of their Labour predecessors for microelectronics and have little interest in the effects of this new technology on society. As one senior civil servant in the Department of Employment admitted privately: 'Microelectronics has gone off the boil.'

It was on 19 June 1978 that the then Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan, announced that the Government's Central Policy Review Staff (the so-called Think Tank) was to take the lead in Whitehall's study of the social and economic implications of microelectronics. On 6 December 1978, the CPRS delivered a paper to the National Economic Development Council.

The Think Tank report was regarded as an interim one and indeed the first paragraph stated that 'this present paper summarises the work so far'. However, in correspondence with me the Head of the CPRS, Sir Kenneth Berrill, now insists that the NEDC paper was the 'fulfilment' of the Callaghan remit: 'We do not envisage the publication of any further CPRS work on this subject.'

Instead Berrill refers to the work of the Department of Employment's Manpower Study Group on Microelectronics. This Group has certainly done a good deal of work on the subject and the first draft of its report should be completed in the next week or two. But already sceptics are wondering how much of this report we will be allowed to see. The report has to go first to a Steering Group chaired by the Department's Permanent Secretary and then, no doubt after further revision, it is likely to go to Ministers. Meanwhile the Head of the Study Group, Assistant Secretary Jonathan Sleigh, will have left to take up another Departmental post in Birmingham and the future of the Group is uncertain.

In answer to a Parliamentary Question on 10 July 1979, the new Government said that it would make public the findings of the report, but this was deliberately worded to leave options open. There is no commitment to actual publication of the full report and one option being considered is simply a series of articles in the DoE *Gazette*.

LARRY STERN

Larry Stern of the *Washington Post* has died of a heart attack. He was 50. Stern, a former NS correspondent in America, was a superb journalist, one of a small group of people whose work created the *Washington Post*'s reputation through the sixties and seventies. At various times he was editor of the paper's Style section, national editor and assistant managing editor. He was, as any *Post* reporter will testify, a marvellously sympathetic editor – understanding and careful. He was also a brilliant reporter and foreign correspondent; his stories were like him – subtle, wry and compassionate. His accounts of US policy in Indochina, Chile and Cyprus, to take just three examples, were written with great force and were all the more effective for the low-key manner in which they were presented. His book on the 1974 Cyprus debacle, *The Wrong Horse*, was a most skilful piece of investigation and observation.

Perhaps his most striking professional characteristic was his honesty. He was a completely independent man, within the *Post* and within the closed world of Washington.

Above all he was a magnificent friend, a man with a great sense of humour and irony who was unfailingly generous. Any British journalist who went to Washington could always be certain of invaluable help and advice; his house and his office were always open. Many of us owe him far more than he ever guessed or, to our shame, than we ever told him. In no sense can he ever be replaced. Washington, the *Post*, journalism and his friends are much the poorer without him.

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IRAN Right-wingers on the rampage

Fred Halliday writes: In Tehran last Tuesday when I arrived at the offices of the opposition newspaper *Ayandegan* I was told by the armed men at both entrances that no-one was at work that day. At first I thought they might be protecting the paper from right wing opponents who forced the paper to close for a few days in May. But soon it became clear that the guards touting Israeli Uzi machine guns and US J-3 rifles were themselves part of the new assault on Tehran's most critical daily. 'These people are renegades' the guards said, using a term (*monofloin*) originally used by Mohammed. 'They are printing criticisms of Imam Khomeini and getting money from Israel'. The teenage vigilantes, who said they were acting on the orders of the Dadestani Committee, itself an instrument of the main Revolutionary Council, insisted they were enforcing the new Iranian press law which forbids criticisms of the country's religious leaders.

All this time other guards were holding the editorial staff of *Ayandegan* captive in the paper's offices, where they were being questioned by the committee's representatives. Although they were allowed to go home, later in the day twelve of them were arrested and accused of working for a foreign power. Two days later a sit-in by the paper's printing workers was broken up by armed committee men; five of the workers had to go to hospital. At least four other papers were also closed.

Any doubts about the regime's intentions were dispelled when, earlier this week, I interviewed foreign minister Ibrahim Yazdi and radio and TV director Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, Khomeini's two main spokesmen in Paris and now two of the most powerful men in the regime. Both fulminated against *Ayandegan* which they claimed had gone beyond 'criticism' to produce 'provocations'. Using documents going back to the sixties, they insisted there had been US and Israeli involvement in the establishment of the paper. I was, however, far from convinced. Perhaps there had been some inaccurate reporting but the main bone of contention – *Ayandegan* with the associations of a decade ago could, leadership – is one on which prime minister Bazargan has often spoken publicly. And, as I pointed out to Dr Yazdi, the logic which tars today's *Ayandegan* with the associations of a decade ago could, with as little justification, be applied to himself: he was for many years an employee of the US Veterans Association.

The real motivation for the attack on *Ayandegan* lies in the paper's exposure of the political and economic problems Iran faces. It spoke out against the ballot-rigging and religious interference in the elections for the Council of Experts that will decide on the constitution and it has highlighted the grievances of the non-Persian minorities such as the Kurds and the Arabs. With a circulation of over 100,000 it had become the main mouthpiece of the opposition.

In Iran, where an almost Manichean perception of US and Israeli influence exists, people quickly believe accusations of foreign interference. As I left the Friday prayers at Tehran University last week, the crowds around me were shouting 'Death to *Ayandegan* the Paper of the Foreigners.' Judging from conversations I had, most people believe the paper had been working for the Israelis, just because the radio and some religious leaders said so. It is not easy for an overwhelmingly illiterate population to gauge such an accusation for itself.

The left-of-centre National Democratic Front responded by organising a march on Sunday in support of *Ayandegan*. As I watched from a side-street, several hundred Muslims, armed with stones and clubs, tried to break up the demonstration, shouting, 'Death to Communism.' Later I found myself amongst a crowd of these *hizballahis* ('party of God people') who assured me that 'the communists' had killed ten people in front of the university gates. Next day the *Jumhuri Islami* (The Islamic Republic) claimed that *Ayandegan* supporters had attacked women dressed in Muslim headscarves. It also claimed that Israeli and BBC broadcasts criticising the limitations of press freedom were proof of the foreign interests behind *Ayandegan*.

Monday was the day of *hizballahis*. From early morning crowds of youths chanting 'Allah is Great' roared around the University. The headquarters of the Fedayin guerrillas, amongst the bravest of the Shah's opponents, were sacked. One woman, whose eldest son had been a Fedayin killed fighting the Shah, said that as she saw the guerrillas' literature being thrown from windows and burnt in the street she felt she had sacrificed her son in vain. Later that day tens of thousands of *hizballahis* were bussed into central Tehran, among them squads of black-cloaked women who marched ten-abreast chanting 'Death to Communism'. Ironically neither the Fedayin, nor the Tudeh Party, whose building was also attacked, had officially supported the protest march in support of *Ayandegan* but this policy had not saved them from the rightists' wrath.

The Bazargan government is now apparently trying to calm the situation, but the closure of *Ayandegan* and the new press law indicate that the government is moving against its opponents nonetheless, and in the provinces attacks on opposition papers and offices have been underway for weeks. This is the month of Ramadan, when Muslims are supposed to suspend their controversies, but with the militant right now on the offensive in Iran it will require more than the equivocations of the Bazargan government to hold them back.

WEALTH New disclosures on the rich

Frank Field writes: Newly released information shows the truly remarkable extent to which the rich have gained from the budget's £4.5 million cuts in direct taxation. Furthermore, the budget has given top salary earners increases of twice and sometimes three times as much as those recommended – and implemented – by the Boyle Review Body on Top Salaries.

Because the tax burden has increased fastest for poor people over the past couple of decades and the tax cuts are now being given overwhelmingly to the rich, the budget is bringing about a major vertical redistribution of income from poor to rich. This has been brought about by the raising of the threshold at which higher rates of tax are paid. The first £750 of taxable income is still charged at the reduced rate of 25 per cent but the standard rate is now taxed on the next £9,250 of income, compared with £7,250 previously. The first band of higher tax rate (40 per cent) is thus charged only on taxable income over £10,001. At the same time the highest tax rate has been brought down from 83 to 60 per cent.

Table 1 shows the extent to which these changes overwhelmingly benefit high income earners. The richest 1 per cent of tax payers gained 15 per cent of all the tax cuts; the richest 7 per cent picked up 34 per cent. In stark contrast, the poorest 10 per cent of all taxpayers – those earning £2,000 or less – gained only 2 per cent of the tax cuts.

Table 1 Who gained what from the budget

Estimated total income in 1979-80 £ p.a.		% of total tax cuts	% of total taxpayers
under	2,000	2	10
	2,000– 4,000	14	31
	4,000– 6,000	21	26
	6,000–10,000	29	26
	10,000–20,000	19	6
Over	20,000	15	1

The second important change in real incomes brought about by the budget has been its effect on the recommendations of the Boyle review body which, in line with successive government policies, establishes the going rate for those on top incomes within the public sector. The committee does not look at the overall distribution of income within society, but compares the top wage earners in the public sector with what are thought to be relevant positions outside. In other words, it mirrors the inequalities in our society.

One of Boyle's most recent reports recommended large increases in pay for top civil servants, armed forces personnel, the judiciary and the chairmen of the nationalised industries. For example it suggested that the pay of an under-secretary should be raised from £14,714 to £16,417. Similarly, Admiral of the Fleet, Field Marshal and Marshal of the Royal Air Force received a £3,000 increase on a salary of £24,936.

The Boyle report defended large salaries for top salary earners on the grounds of comparability with the private sector and justified its awards partly on the basis of the supposedly penal pre-budget tax rates, expressing its recommendations in terms of net, after tax, pay. Its data is reproduced in Table 2 together with information from the latest report of Incomes Data Services, showing what the net pay of high salary earners would be on their *pre*-Boyle salary rates after taking into account the budget tax changes. In five cases the net pay is in excess of the rate recommended by Boyle; in the others it is only fractionally below.

For instance, the budget changes gave the Secretary of the Cabinet a net pay of £14,477 – £341 in excess of the Boyle recommendation. But he, like all the other office holders, has also received the Boyle increase. The group of service chiefs on £24,936 mentioned earlier gained not only £3,000 from Boyle but also won tax gains of £3,052 from the budget. Put another way, to give the recipients the same increase in net incomes would have required an increase in their gross pay of £7,394. Similarly, for the chairman of the NEB to gain the same net increase in pay brought about by the budget changes alone his gross pay would have had to rise by £16,484; Boyle awarded him £3,500.

In recent years high pay has been justified by the penal rates of taxation. These no longer exist yet no move is made to lessen inequalities in gross pay. Rather the reverse: high salary earners have received big pay increases which have been doubled, sometimes trebled by tax cuts. In stark contrast, the low paid have gained almost nothing and the government have made it plain that the modest awards of the Clegg Commission will be implemented only at the cost of decreasing the numbers employed in the public sector.

Table 2 How tax cuts help high earners

	Pre-Boyle Gross pay £	Post-Budget* After tax £	Boyle recommended net pay level £
Secretary to Cabinet	22,422	14,477	14,136
Permanent Secretary	20,772	13,681	13,680
Field Marshal	21,871	14,228	13,750
General	19,947	13,269	13,325
Lord Chief Justice	25,584	15,899	15,999
High Court Judge	20,772	13,681	14,291
Chairmen – British National Oil Corporation	35,265	19,833	19,796
National Enterprise Board	35,265	19,833	18,738

**Source: Income Data Services.*

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FINANCE
Duncan Campbell & Blaine Stothard

How a British bank set up a tax avoidance empire

Sea-sick in Norway

ON MONDAY, Norwegian shipowner Hilmar Reksten will stand trial on the most serious charges of tax and exchange control evasion Norway has ever seen. The trial will be extremely embarrassing for the prestigious London merchant bank Hambros. The official report of the Bank of Norway to Bergen police investigators – a copy of which has been obtained by the NEW STATESMAN – claims that Hambros and five of its senior officials, including the chairman and deputy chairman, were party to the activities which have helped put Reksten in the dock. Next week the prosecution will produce correspondence between Hambros and Reksten, seized during police investigations. Another Norwegian shipowner will give evidence of Hambros' role in the companies Reksten used to conceal his overseas interests from the scrutiny of the Norwegian authorities.

The fourteen charges against Reksten allege that his illegal manipulations of his shipping fleet have netted him about £110 million. One set of charges deals with a profit of between £60 and £70 million made on the chartering of his large Norwegian tanker fleet and spirited away between 1967 and 1973. Another set of charges deals with his involvment – dating from the time when the money went missing – in the Liberian registered Palmerston Holdings. It is this company with which Hambros were most closely involved.

Palmerston was set up in 1973 to buy the Zapata Naess Fleet, which was then in financial difficulties. Its ships were chartered jointly with P&O and a deal was eventually agreed under which Palmerston and P&O would each have half of Zapata Naess. Reksten told the Norwegian authorities that Palmerston was owned by a group of international investors and that neither he nor Hambros had any 'ownership interest' but that he would like to provide security for a loan that Hambros were to make to Palmerston to finance the Zapata Naess deal. In return for guaranteeing this $104 million loan with the security of his own fleet, he would get a management agreement with Palmerston which would give him the power to run the fleet. The Norwegian authorities, who control the overseas investment of their native shipowners, were told the deal would 'strengthen Norwegian shipping interests and extend their earnings potential.' The Department of Trade swallowed this story and allowed the deal to go ahead, so long as any profits on the operation were sent back to Norway.

Reksten's story was a deception. In fact, Palmerston's shares were owned by Hambros and Reksten, as a letter sent by Hambros to Reksten in May 1973 shows:

> Hambros Bank Limited will hold all the issued shares which are to be registered in the name of Hambros Bank (Nominees) Ltd on a nominee basis: but you will arrange for the beneficial ownership of the 67% of the total equity, Arne Naess will have 23 and the Hambro Group the remaining 10. The Directors of Palmerston Holdings will be Harry Fitzgibbons, Charles Perrin and Fergus Dymock, all of whom are employees of Hambros Bank.

Later Naess fell out with Reksten and is now a principal prosecution witness; at the time Reksten took Naess's shares. This was explained by Charles Hambro, the bank's chairman, in the text of a letter he wanted to send to P&O and which he sent first to Reksten for his approval in January 1974:

> I . . . can confirm that the Palmerston shareholdings are unchanged from last summer when the purchase was completed. That is to say Hilmar Reksten (through family trusts) controls 90% of Palmerston Holdings and the Hambro Group the remaining 10%

Reksten's 'family trusts' were shareholders in Palmerston through another Liberian company Cornhill Shipping, run by Reksten's US lawyer Asbjørn Lunde. (The Norwegian police have unsuccessfully tried to get Lunde returned to Norway.) Reksten's interest in Palmerston was, of course, disguised from the Norwegian authorities and the Bank of Norway report gives several instances of Hambros colluding with Reksten to keep this information secret. Although a client's confidentiality is an absolute principle of banking, in this case the secrecy concealed Reksten's allegedly unlawful transactions. According to the Bank of Norway report, by transferring foreign assets to become the beneficial owner of Palmerston Reksten had committed four offences against Norwegian tax laws.

It is not clear how far Hambros were involved in getting exchange control clearance for the (mythical) guarantee scheme in 1973 but in 1975, when Reksten's creditors were worried about his solvency, Hambros director Charles Perrin attended a meeting in Bergen where copies of Reksten's application to stand security for Hambros' loan to Palmerston were handed out. The purpose was to convince creditors that Reksten did not have any overseas assets with which to pay his debts and convince them that neither Hambros nor Reksten had any beneficial interest in Palmerston.

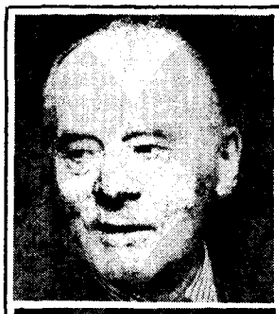
THE QUESTION REMAINS of how Reksten's purchase of Palmerston was financed. Interestingly, there was never any record of his ships being registered as security. The Norwegian police believe that the real security for the Hambros loan came from elsewhere: the profits of Reksten's 1967-73 charter operation, siphoned off by paper companies in Liberia, Bermuda and Panama and ending up as real estate investments.

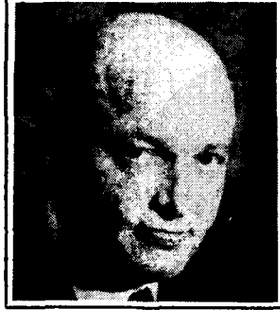
Palmerston was not the only scheme which Reksten employed. The Bank of Norway report, writing of Reksten's company structure, says:

> The structure . . . is designed to maximise *overall* profits . . . the company best suited to doing so gaining shipbuilding grants, intercompany charters to accumulate assets in another country, and so on . . . In each case the real ownership of the companies is disguised by founding fictitious holding companies.

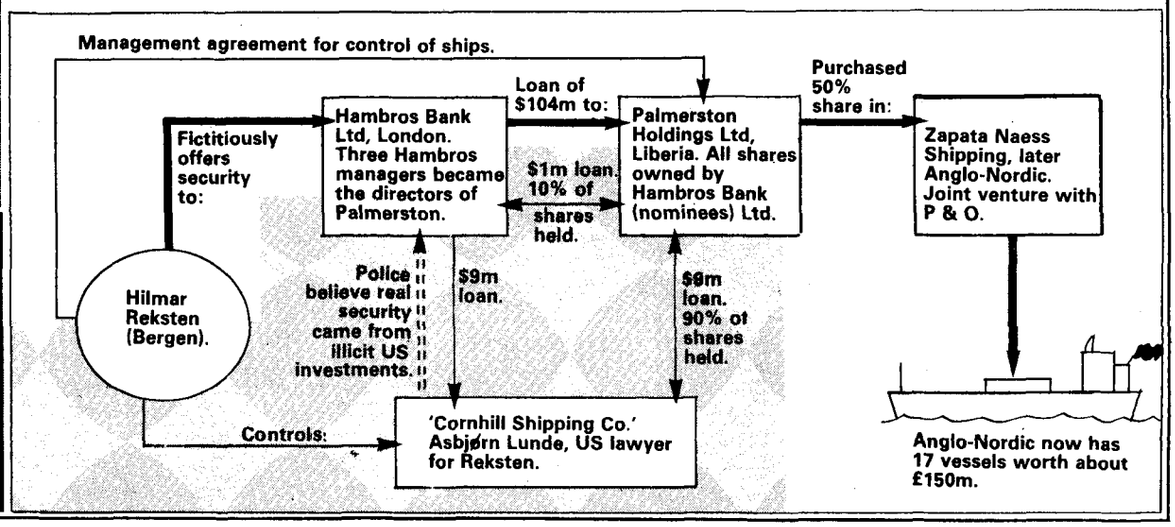
Cornhill was one such company; Arran Investment Corporation of Panama was another – which, again, involved Hambros.

Arran controlled a British registered company, Thornhope Shipping, though most of the shares were registered in the name of Hambros Nominees. Reksten had been on the board of Thornhope since 1943 but the company remained dormant until 1970 when it placed an order for two ships – worth £23





The Bank of Norway thought Reksten was pledging his ships as security to Hambros. In fact the police believe (the shaded area) that he used real estate investments in Long Island, which he had bought with funds accumulated in breach of Norway's exchange control regulations. Top left, Reksten; bottom, Sir Charles Hambro.


Management agreement for control of ships.
Fictitiously offers security to:
Hambros Bank Ltd, London. Three Hambros managers became the directors of Palmerston.
Loan of $104m to:
$1m loan. 10% of shares held.
Palmerston Holdings Ltd, Liberia. All shares owned by Hambros Bank (nominees) Ltd.
Purchased 50% share in:
Zapata Naess Shipping, later Anglo-Nordic. Joint venture with P & O.
Hilmar Reksten (Bergen).
Police believe real security came from illicit US investments.
$9m loan.
$8m loan. 90% of shares held.
Controls:
'Cornhill Shipping Co.' Asbjørn Lunde, US lawyer for Reksten.
Anglo-Nordic now has 17 vessels worth about £150m.

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million – with the Swan Hunter shipyard. Hambros applied to the Bank of England for the ship building grants for the two ships and a letter from a Hambros director to Reksten in June 1970 stressed the importance of the company being managed and controlled in Britain to qualify for the grants. Taking on these new ships involved a big increase in the share capital of Thornhope and the Bank of Norway report considers this share subscription by Reksten – the ultimate owner of the company – to be a breach of foreign exchange controls as Department of Trade authority had not been secured.

The Bank report considers that Thornhope's role was in fact to channel earnings to another Reksten shadow company, Gannet Shipping in the Cayman Islands. The Bank of Norway told the police that:

> Gannet's sole function was the diversion of profits and the accumulation of assets, and the aim of the company was to avoid British and Norwegian tax and foreign exchange regulations.

Public interest in the Reksten trial in Norway is heightened by the fact in the tanker market slump Reksten virtually went bust. He had to be rescued by the Norwegian government at considerable cost while, it is believed, his own fleet, bought with his concealed profits, made money. The feeling against Hambros runs particularly high because as recently as last year Charles Hambro flew to Norway and applied strenuous pressure to the prime minister not to withdraw the government guarantees over the Reksten companies. The guarantees Hambros obtained saved his bank from immense potential losses – fears of which had already forced its share price down. Now, the Bank of Norway report, which shows how Reksten concealed assets which could have been used to meet these debts, alleges that the companies of which Hambros employees were directors, were part of the whole scheme. Formally, Hambros refuse to discuss the matter; but their position is that they have not been accused of being a party to Reksten's offences and are not in the dock with him.

SPAIN
Julie Flint

Are right-wing Spaniards paying the Mafia to murder Basque militants?

French assassins, Spanish gold

A SERIES OF carefully planned attacks on prominent members of the hard-line 'military' wing of ETA has cost the Basque separatist organisation four lives in the past seven months, including two of the top 20 names on Premier Adolfo Suarez's 'wanted' list. Although it is rare to find any agreement between the Madrid government and supporters of Basque independence, members of both sides coincide in the belief that the attacks are part of a state-backed scheme involving hired killers from the French underworld.

Since the attacks began last December with the assassination of Jose Miguel Deñarán Ordeñana (the man called 'Argala' who killed Franco's first and only Prime Minister, Luis Carrero Blanco) scores of ETA refugees living across the border in the French Basque provinces have done a duck dive, convinced that the ambushes are not the work of Spanish police as in the Franco days, but of a wider, more formal network financed in part by right wing Basque industrialists whose 'revolutionary taxes' (ETA jargon for protection money) are the organisation's main source of income. Some *Etarras*, including one of Argala's closest collaborators on the Carrero Blanco killing, believe a special unit of the Spanish army is picking them off. Others suspect professional assassins working with collaboration and *carte blanche* from police on both sides of the border.

Although the vast majority of the Franco-trained police would probably see nothing wrong in killing members of an organisation that has taken 26 police lives already this year, few *Etarras* believe Spanish policemen are squeezing the triggers today. 'We noticed a point after Suarez took over when the activities of the parallel police [off-duty police working on the wrong side of the law] dropped right down,' says an ETA source in Spain. 'They know what's going on, but it's not them doing it.'

Since 1 January last year, when the last ETA prisoner was amnestied in Spain, police have sent some 400 alleged *Etarras* to court and about 160 of these to gaol – heavy wastage for any organisation, even one with popular backing such as ETA. This conventional police pressure (still not always conventionally applied) has not, however, touched the backbone of ETA – the hard core of veterans with the record and repute of an Argala. The freelance attacks have been going on at a rhythm not seen before: six attacks in the past seven months, with four dead and three gravely wounded. In December, Argala – ETA's tactical brain and one of the military wing's seven- or eight-member executive committee. In January, Jose Manuel Pagoaga, 'Peixoto' – ETA's treasurer and information chief, cut down by sub-machine guns while leaving his home in St Jean de Luz and, although alive thanks to an extraordinarily strong constitution, blinded. In May, one dead and the commander of ETA's terrorist activities, Domingo Iturbe Abasolo, 'Txomin', wounded in a machine-gun ambush near Bayonne airport. In June, Enrique Gomez Alvarez, 'Korta', an ETA commando trainer, killed in a shooting attack from a passing car. Last weekend, Juan Lopategui, 'Pantu' shot dead while driving with Txomin's brother, who survived his injuries.

These attacks are very far removed from the last anti-ETA campaign of 1975-76, when right-wing commandos roamed the Basque country – especially the Spanish Basque country – bombing ETA-linked shops and chalets like cowboys who owned (or worked for) the local sheriff, but causing only one death. Sources close to ETA are convinced 'there is a mass of money' behind the current, quite different, anti-ETA campaign. 'A vast network has been built up around Basque refugees in the French provinces', says one close observer. 'There is a permanent net around the places they frequent, and that costs a lot of money. And then there are flying commandos usually composed of three or four people who wait at strategic points like crossroads to intercept and kill.'

The assassination of Argala, probably the biggest blow to ETA in its entire history, leaves no doubt as to the resources available to his killers, for the ETA leader kept constantly on the move and informed only two people – his wife and another ETA leader, Francisco Javier Ayazulaica, 'Trepa' – of his whereabouts. Yet Argala was tracked down and killed, with what looked like a rare interest in method – a bomb under his car almost five years to the day after a bomb exploded by him blew Carrero Blanco to heaven as he drove to Mass. 'The Spanish oligarchy, with the complicity of the French police, began getting this criminal apparatus set up about two years ago', says a prominent Basque close to ETA. 'Mafia men with money behind them started moving into the French border area and setting up as respectable, modest citizens – small hotel owners and such. Spain doesn't need to risk involving its police.'

It comes as something of a surprise to hear this view echoed privately in the Madrid government – especially at a time when the government is under no pressure to float alternative theories to the parallel police, since no-one is asking questions about attacks on men who have themselves killed 49 Spaniards this year. Although insisting he has no hard proof, a high-ranking member of the government who knows the Basque theme well and who acknowledges that parallel police were active in the Basque country for some time after Franco's death in November 1975, says privately: 'My feeling is that the Mafia is in the middle of this. I would be very surprised if the state were directly involved'. Does this open the possibility of indirect involvement? 'We have to be seen to have clean hands. A state today has many ways of doing a job like this, and many ways of getting it paid for.'

One way would be through industry, which would certainly pass the hat in order to see the end of revolutionary taxes and the return of investor confidence. In this context, it passes for fact among informed Basques that a prominent right-wing industrialist who has consistently refused to pay ETA's taxes has deposited hundreds of thousands of pounds in a Swiss bank to buy Mafia revenge should ETA harm any member of his family. Scores of others are spending heavily on protection.

The suspicions aroused in the Spanish government have been fuelled in part by the French police, who have told officials here they believe their own underworld is responsible for the anti-ETA campaign. In evidence, they cite the fact that the killers abandon their weapons at the scene of their crimes, like mobsters anywhere. This passing of the buck, of course, suits the French police well, for the punishment ETA is getting in France is unthinkable without their collaboration.

Independent support for the Mafia theory came recently from the Paris daily *Le Matin*, which attributed the shooting deaths of two members of the far-left organisation GRAPO to French mobsters hired by a Spanish businessman to hit both ETA and GRAPO (a relatively new group which has this year become a real menace to Spanish stability with some 30 assassinations including an army general and a cafe bomb that killed eight). According to *Le Matin*, the Paris killings of 28-29 June were the signal that the contract, reportedly signed in Biarritz two months earlier, was underway. As in the attacks against ETA, the weapons used against the *Grapos* were found ditched near the bodies.

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INDUSTRY
Michael Meacher

The Japanese are not the motor industry's greatest threat

Coping with the multi-nationals

TWO YEARS AGO Britain's foreign trade surplus in motor vehicles and components amounted to £1.3 billion. Last year it was £776 million. The experience of the first five months of this year suggests a deficit for 1979 as a whole of around £500 million. Will Britain have a car industry in five years' time?

Most stark of all in recent years has been the massive increase in imports. In 1965 imports secured only 5 per cent of the UK market and in 1969 it was still only 10 per cent. Thereafter they rose quickly. By 1971 they accounted for almost 20 per cent of the market; by 1975 it was 33 per cent; by 1977, 45 per cent and in the first half of this year it is not less than 55 per cent.

Contrary to many impressions, this doubling of market share for imports within the last five years has been due to imports from the EEC rather than Japan. Since 1975 imports of passenger cars from Japan have actually fallen by 6 per cent, while those from the EEC have risen by 57 per cent. This indicates the success of the Labour government's voluntary restraint 'understanding' with the Japanese. After rising sharply during the seventies from ½ per cent to 10½ per cent Japanese imports' share of the UK market has, at least for the time being, stabilised: this year their share has fallen slightly to 9.8 per cent. However, they cannot be expected to accept voluntary restraint when there is no attempt to reduce the flow from the Continent and when they are, in effect, sacrificing market share to the EEC.

This rise in imports has been achieved, mainly, not by European car companies, such as Citroen, Volkswagen and Fiat, but by US multinational car companies which have plants in Britain. Imports from the EEC by these companies – Ford, Vauxhall, (General Motors) and Chrysler (American owned until this year) – have risen from 4 per cent of the UK market in 1975 to no less than 19 per cent this year. While imports from the EEC as a whole over this period have risen by slightly more than a half, imports by these US companies based in Britain have risen by a staggering eight-fold. Ford alone this year is taking 14½ per cent of the UK market by its imports from the Continent, and for the first time ever Ford (UK) actually imported more cars than it produced in Britain (148,900 cars imported compared with 144,000 cars produced in the UK).

The British government's regular argument is that these trade flows are the result of British industry's poor productivity. There are several weaknesses in this argument. First, the deliberate sourcing of imports from the continent by US companies – often in the pursuit of long term corporate development policies rather than based on present day relative efficiencies – must make it harder for UK factories to achieve competitive unit costs. So company statements condemning production failures become self-fulfilling. And second, in so far as the fall in production is caused by management revising down forecasts in the face of falling UK demand and rising imports, this is also self-fulfilling.

Third, it cannot be claimed that production has been lost because of industrial disputes. Between 1972 and 1976 annual car production fell from 1.92 million units to 1.22 million units – that is, by 700,000. Yet the average number of cars lost through industrial disputes in each year was, on the manufacturer's own (admittedly, approximate) estimates only 146,000. Furthermore, the average number lost today is no higher than in 1972.

Finally, Britain's manufacturing weakness *is* to some extent the result of higher production costs, which are in turn caused by lower productivity, higher manning levels, bad planning and so on. But in the present situation – where three out of four of Britain's car companies are foreign-owned and are free to buy where they like – these problems will be solved, not by tackling the structural problems, but by buying abroad. Britain's weaknesses are, therefore, likely to be exacerbated.

What are the conclusions of this analysis? First, the British car industry clearly has the potential to *produce* many more than the 1.2 million cars it is doing at the moment. Second, it is imperative that the foreign companies increase their production and sourcing of exports from the UK. The government should insist that the companies start discussing this with them, with the government committed to whatever aid is necessary. The Labour government's experience with the flimsy facade of the planning agreement with Chrysler stresses the importance of devising a way to make the companies keep their side of any bargain.

Third, and most important of all, if any plans are to succeed, the workers in the industry will have to be closely associated with forward planning at company and plant level. Bodies like the Motor Industry Tripartite Group are not enough as they merely bring together company chairmen and top trade union leaders under the chairmanship of the minister of industry.

Arm-twisting the UK-based US companies amounts to covert import controls but neither this nor overt controls would be sufficient. To work they require enormous back-up in improving every aspect of productivity. To avoid import controls becoming 'feather bedding' there needs to be a far more intensive application of joint control techniques between management and shop floor than has been tried in the car industry, or indeed any industry. Higher targets will be achieved only if representatives of the workforce have been fully involved in preparing plans, and are committed to them and to an agreed system of rewards. But without a reasonable assurance of sustained higher demand (and then more profits) which controls on imports could bring, it seems unlikely that the amount of investment required for sustained recovery would ever be forthcoming.

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INDIA
K. R. Sundar Rajan

Once more Mrs Gandhi holds the ring

The vultures gather

WHEN HIS JANATA PARTY government was collapsing in parliament following mass defections, all that Prime Minister Morarji Desai bothered to tell journalists was that 'my pulse was steady even when my plane crashed in Jorhat last year'. The entire crew perished in the accident but Desai refused to attend the funeral service or call on the wives of the dead. His admirers, never more than a pathetic handful, concocted the story that when the plane was attempting a crash-landing in bad weather, Desai was lost in contemplation. After emerging from the wreck, he is reported to have walked a mile to the nearest hamlet, knocked at a peasant's door and resumed his contemplation.

So, when Desai tells us that the party of 'bread with freedom and stability' will emerge stronger from its present ordeals, no one takes him seriously. Throughout the 28 months Janata was in power, having defeated Mrs Gandhi's dictatorial rule in a sensational democratic election, the insensitive Desai never once admitted that there was a serious crisis in the ruling party. Yet right from the first month its five constituents, ranging from Socialists to right-wing Hindu nationalists, were busy digging each other's grave. No serious political or ideological principles were involved. It was basically a fight among three power-hungry old men – Desai, Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram – in which other leaders and the rank and file joined with destructive glee.

The issue which finally brought the Janata Party down – the militancy of the Hindu Jana Sangh group – was only an alibi. Charan Singh, the new Prime Minister, did not mind the Jana Sangh's presence in the party when the final battle against Mrs Gandhi's fascist rule was being mounted. He was very close to the Jana Sangh's top bosses. But when he decided to oust Desai, he calculated that the best way to discredit Janata was to rouse the suspicions of the nearly 100 million Muslims and other non-Hindus. Singh also shrewdly understood that that was also the most effective way of deflecting Muslim and minority

India's new Prime Minister, Charan Singh (left) and (right) Mrs Gandhi, who currently supports him.

sympathy from Mrs Gandhi who was trying to stage a comeback with non-Hindu support.

There is a very simple explanation for the suicidal folly of Janata's leaders. They assumed that they had defeated Mrs Gandhi's undivided Congress Party in the March 1977 election because of their wide popularity. But the truth was that Mrs Gandhi would not have been dethroned but for the forced sterilisations and other excesses and the ridiculous optimism with which she ordered the election. Even as it was just being born, Janata was swept into power on a tidal wave of public resentment against Mrs Gandhi. Be that as it may, the unexpected victory provided the democratic parties with an opportunity to rebuild the political system securely within the framework of liberal values. They failed in this task.

IRONICALLY, THE NEW administration led by the 77-year-old Charan Singh, a man with antiquated economic views, leans heavily on the support of Mrs Gandhi's breakaway Congress faction. The first test of the government will come on 20 August when parliament meets to test Singh's support in the house. Mrs Gandhi has been deliberately making contradictory statements about her intentions, confident of the crucial role she can play with her 72 votes in a house of 538 MPs. Says a close friend of Mrs Gandhi: 'She will not reveal her mind till the last moment.' Why should she?

Written off as a spent force with the prospect of spending many years in prison for her emergency misdeeds, Mrs Gandhi is now, thanks to the sick ambitions and disgusting tricks of Janata's old men, well placed to decide who the next prime minister will be. Her followers make no secret of the fact that they expect her to be in her familiar old official bungalow on Safdarjang Road before long: all that is necessary is to play one Janata faction against another. Predictably, Jagjivan Ram, the new leader of the opposition Janata faction, the largest party in parliament with 205 MPs, has said that 'if Mrs Gandhi wants to support us, that is her business. How can we stop anyone from supporting us in our effort to defeat the defectors' regime of Charan Singh?'

A top member of Prime Minister Charan Singh's cabinet told me: 'Don't think Charan Singh is a baby. Very soon there will be so many more defections to our coalition (of Janata defectors and the anti-Mrs Gandhi Congress faction) that we will be able to form a stable government without having to lean on Mrs Ghandi.' But this appears to be wishful thinking.

Even if Mrs Gandhi chooses to prop up Charan Singh on 20 August, she is most unlikely to continue her support for long. Nor is there any possibility of an effective democratic realignment of political groups. Perhaps a mid-term general election may become inevitable. This is bound to benefit Mrs Gandhi. She is unlikely to grab a majority of seats in parliament but if her Congress faction makes a pact with the Charan Singh defectors, the two can manage to win a clear majority. Mrs Gandhi has already made it known that she will have no objection to Singh heading a post-election government. As one knowledgeable observer of the New Delhi political zoo put it: 'Mrs Gandhi is an adept in swallowing friends and foes alike.'

Whichever way one looks at it, the prospects for India are grim. Under Janata rule, the constitution has been purged and purified in order to render a return to emergency rule impossible. But this was again typical of the self-deception of the men who overthrew Mrs Gandhi's dynastic autocracy. The coming emergency may not be the same as the one which was clamped down in June 1975. It may be more sophisticated, less sudden, and even pleasant but a return to the uncertainties which spawned a dictatorship seems a clear possibility.

Unless of course the Indian voter again shows the same lavishly praised maturity and discrimination as in March 1977. Many people, however, believe that there has been little politicisation of the vast masses of illiterate voters in the last 28 months. Indeed, it appears that the savage in-fighting in Janata has eroded the average Indian's faith in the democratic process. It is as if the political drama is being staged for a limited audience consisting of lusty old men and women, political parasites and hangers-on, self-appointed mediators and image-builders and crafty foreign vultures hungry for the carcass of Indian democracy.

New Delhi, 5 August

Oilgate notebook

■ Executives from BP and Shell were part of a secret delegation of British businessmen who called at the Foreign Office last month. Their purpose: to urge Parliamentary Under-Secretary Richard Luce *not* to lift sanctions against Rhodesia because they feared retaliation from black African countries. One suspects, however, that the protestations of the oil companies didn't carry quite the weight that they might have done before the Bingham revelations.

■ Once again it seems that HMG is indulging in the old game of issuing misleading 'assurances' over oil supplies. Recently Lord Carrington indignantly announced that it was quite 'untrue' that North Sea Oil was being sold to South Africa.

It may well be that we don't sell *crude* oil to South Africa – but *refined* oil is still being sold to the apartheid regime. Last year, for instance, Britain exported nearly £2 million worth of lubricants to South Africa. These essential lubricants – presumably supplied by BP, Shell, and Castrol – are partly refined from North Sea Oil.

■ One of the lessons of the Nigerian move against BP is the need for tighter British Government control over the company's operations. The Government's majority shareholding in BP gives it the right to appoint two directors to the board. But since the resignation of Lord Greenhill, almost a year ago, no one has taken his place, and we have only had one representative in the boardroom at Britannic House. BP director Tom Jackson has therefore been the main link between the company and its largest shareholder.

Jackson, it must be acknowledged, played an important part in forcing the Government to set up the Bingham Inquiry two years ago. His opposition to apartheid is also well known. But as leader of the Post Office Workers' Union and Chairman of the TUC he does not seem to have had sufficient time to effectively monitor BP's delicate involvement in Southern Africa. Surely the time has come for the Government to appoint a full-time representative to the BP board with sufficient resources to enable him to really keep a close watch over the performance of Britain's largest company.

Martin Bailey

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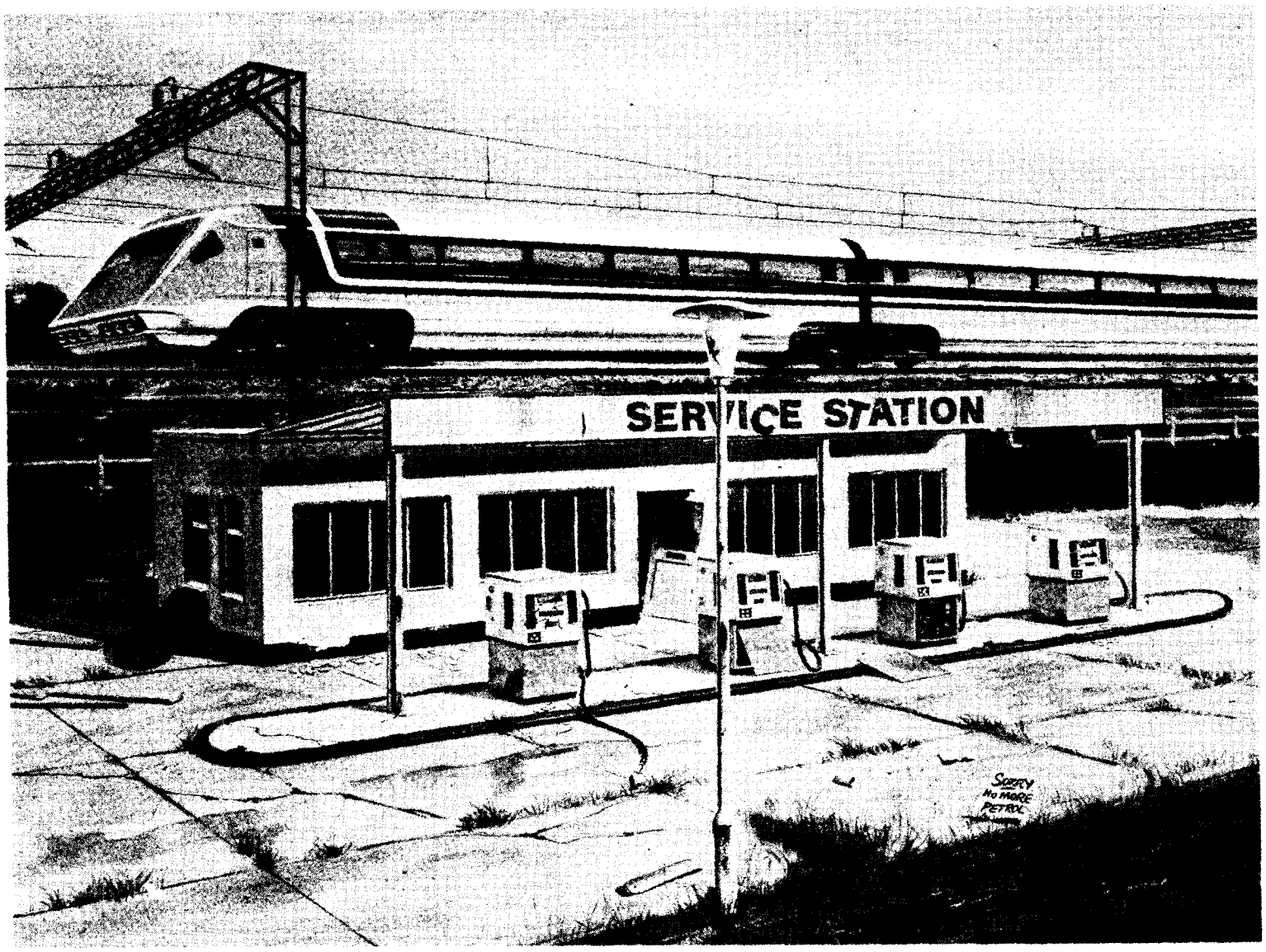

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The last British colony

Rhodesia, says CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS, provides Britain with her last chance ever to do anything large and decent about her colonial heritage. Are we at last prepared to call the settlers' bluff?

IF, SOME FIFTEEN years ago, an elite of about 90,000 adult Africans had established a system of racial supremacy over a mainly European population in a British overseas territory, would the then British Government have forsworn the use of force? If this same rebel regime had, in the name of 'Africanisation', abolished even the freedoms and safeguards required to govern a colony, and made the police, the army, the press and the judiciary into instruments of state, would British oil companies have rushed to supply its every need? If the European citizens had been designated as house servants and field labourers with no claim on the franchise 'for a thousand years', would successive British Prime Ministers have negotiated only with the dusky despots, and ignored the European spokesmen locked up in their remote detention camps? If, after all this indignity, the Europeans had begun to light fires under their tormentors, would they have been described as 'terrorists'?

The answer to all these (absurdly hypothetical and utterly non-parallel) questions is 'probably not'. Well then, what if revolt and disorder had so far spread as to endanger the very life and economy of this unhappy colony? Suppose for a moment that the repentant and scared African oligarchy had invited *some* European spokesmen out of prison and exile and into the Cabinet.

Suppose that, in exchange for continued control of the army, the lusher parts of the economy, the civil service and the courts, the Africans had even allowed the Europeans to vote on who these spokesmen might be. Would that make it all right? If it didn't make it all right, would those Europeans who repudiated the deal be considered fair targets for indiscriminate bombing, for deportation *en masse* and for the confiscation and destruction of such land and beasts as were left to them? If the African government pursuing this policy had failed, in years of hard fighting, to erect even one prisoner of war camp, would it be called uncivilised, however much it proclaimed Christian values?

Only three years ago, I can remember Bishop Muzorewa's dramatic intervention at the Geneva conference. Here is what he said about the colonial war being waged against his people. After detailing many cases of torture, imprisonment without trial, sudden 'disappearance' of political activists and the rest, he went on:

> The Rhodesian security forces continue to impound the cattle, sheep and goats of the African people in the war zones. There is indiscriminate maiming, killing and massacring of civilians. The cold-blooded murder of over 675 refugees of the Nhazonia camp in Mozambique is a good example. Christian missionaries of various denominations continue to be harassed and deported. Almost daily, we hear of men and women who are shot dead for allegedly breaking the curfew regulations. The regime's security forces and farmers are given orders to shoot anything that moves after 5 pm . . . In the light of the above evidence, can we allow the Ministries of Defence and of Law and Order to be headed by men who are capable of committing such brutal atrocities upon defenceless civilians? Zimbabwe, unreservedly, rejects this proposition.

AP

Martial law in action.

Bishop Muzorewa went on to demand, in order, the release of all political prisoners, the revocation of all death sentences, the granting of a general amnesty, the freeing of all parties and papers and an end to the State of Emergency.

This lengthy preamble and speculation is necessary to bestow some perspective, and to anticipate some objections. African states and leaders are indeed not very democratic, and the continent may not be a vineyard of socialism, but the time is past when neo-colonial con-tricks could be played with ease. The simple-minded racism with which the problem has been 'covered' in many of our papers will never obscure, for Africans, the fact that the original double standard was set by Europeans. It does not escape their notice that those anxious propagandists who have rushed to the Bishop's side are those who used to make excuses for Smith, and who regarded even Muzorewa himself as an incendiary cleric.

There are, also, two issues upon which Thatcher's late-to-repentance summit may break up. These are, first, the 'safeguards' for white Rhodesians and, second, the control and composition of the armed forces.

MUZOREWA'S REMARKS quoted above make it reasonably clear that the armed forces question is still very much with us; his own nominal position as commander in chief may have given him a new perspective on the situation, but the villagers living under a 22-hour curfew may disagree. The Indemnity and Compensation Act gives any soldier or cop immunity *in advance* for any act he may commit (a piece of legislation described as atrocious even by the former Rhodesian Chief Justice). And the martial law regulations, many of them actually promulgated by Muzorewa himself during the transitional government, are even more dramatic:

> Executive officers of the government, the military forces and other security forces of the government and its other servants employed to assist the government are hereby invested with full and complete powers and authority to do all things in their judgement proper and necessary.

Ninety per cent of the country is now governed by that fiat. A few cases of 'abuse' do surface every now and again in the servile pages of the *Rhodesia Herald*. Judging by this 'tip' (a flogging of a woman villager here, a rape by soldiers there) the 'iceberg' must be quite something. But guesswork is more or less superfluous. There is no difficulty for the visitor in having a few drinks with a 'troopie' on leave and hearing his favourite 'gook' story. 'In a kraal when we go in, it's "shoot anything that moves". In a TTL (Tribal Trust Land) it's "shoot anything that runs". It seems unfair, that one, because I can see why they run from us. But nobody ever complains.' A good way of raising a laugh, and getting your back slapped with all the affection which the professional reserves for the spectator, is to ask whether it makes any difference having a black Prime Minister.

As for 'white safeguards', it doesn't seem obvious to all Africans that those who kept them in subjection for so long, and who have now obliquely admitted their mistake, should still have an extra place in the sun. Especially since so few of them are Rhodesian-born, and as many as 40 per cent arrived *after* Smith's hijack of the country. (Since 1969, one eighth of the white population has cleared out. Interestingly, the Jewish community has declined in that period from 7,000 to 2,300, which may reflect the despair of those whites who were opposed to racial discrimination.)

It was Henry Kissinger in 1976 who got the leadership of the Rhodesian Front to 'concede the principle of majority rule'. He didn't manage to pull off this trick simply by flattering Smith about his cleverness, or by making dark allusions to the military position. He did it by pointing out to them something which they had been too blinkered to notice before. They could, he said, have power without responsibility. They could hold on to their farms, their army, their civil service and so forth, while letting black politicians tour the country telling Africans that land reform would have to wait. This fitted in with Kissinger's general strategy for the region, which involved a 'tilt' towards South Africa and a corresponding attempt to secure compliant black states on the perimeter. The plan was, generally speaking, a failure. America was too closely involved and identified with Portuguese fascism to get a working coalition together in time for Angola. Mozambique, too, went its own way; South Africa moved to a harder line on Namibia. But the idea caught on in Rhodesia all right, and the minutes of some private Rhodesian Front meetings show that the white leadership could hardly believe its luck. They told their supporters in confidence that Muzorewa had conceded more than they would ever have supposed possible. That was why the white referendum on the constitution went off so smoothly. As I stood on the tarmac of Salisbury airport and watched Bishop Muzorewa step off a South African Airways flight and make a speech about Mrs Thatcher's fine qualities, I mentally tipped my hat in obeisance to Kissinger's abiding influence.

Still, the Smith-Muzorewa compromise, which still enjoys undoubted support in the urban centres, is eroding fast, and for a richly complex variety of reasons. The first, and the

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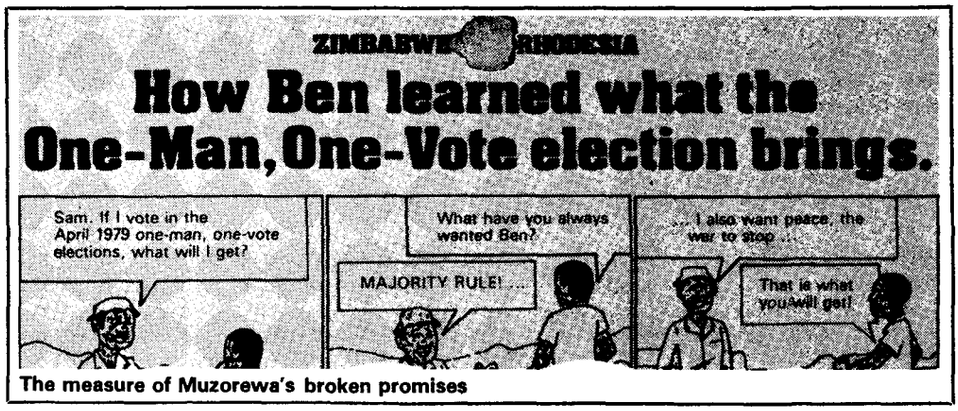
ZIMBABWE RHODESIA
How Ben learned what the One-Man, One-Vote election brings.
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What have you always wanted Ben?
MAJORITY RULE! ...
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That is what you will get!
The measure of Muzorewa's broken promises

most notorious, is that it makes white soldiers, ranchers and civil servants even more powerful, in relation to politicians, than they were before. This does not arise simply from the Constitution (whose author, Mr George Smith, has just replaced Jack Gaylard as secretary to the Cabinet), though the Constitution does empower unelected Commissions with wide authority. (In the crucial field of education, for instance, the permanent secretary and the Public Services Commission can veto an appointment of the Minister.) Nor does it arise from the reserved white seats in Parliament, which are only important because sections 157 and 160 of the Constitution accord veto powers to them, too. It arises because of Muzorewa's preferred style of government, which is to fight and manoeuvre for African support while General Peter Walls runs the war, Mr David Smith runs the economy and a number of faceless men run the Civil Service.

LIKE ALL TANDEMS, the Zimbabwe-Rhodesian model has one party pedalling while the other one steers. It is, to borrow a phrase, a land of contrasts; a gripping exercise in Afro-Saxon attitudes. As Air Rhodesia flies you into Salisbury at night, the pilot issues the usual security orders about seat-belts and cigarettes and then adds that those sitting by the windows should pull down their blinds. 'This is a routine security measure, and there is no cause for alarm.' Within an hour of landing, you can be sitting in a disco-bar-restaurant talking mild treason as the latest sanctions-busting hits entertain the 'troopies' and their girls.

While chatting discreetly to Joshua Nkomo's most dedicated supporters (their party banned, their papers closed, their friends and families detained) you can hear them speak warmly of Tiny Rowland and Lonrho, and of the many kindnesses reciprocated between them. After a morning spent down in Fort Victoria, interviewing surrendered guerrillas in their shabby Mozambique gear and their bitter teenage reticence, I passed an evening with white liberal Salisbury applauding a fine performance of *Othello* which had as many blacks in the audience as it did in the cast. The brave couple who run the Justice and Peace Commission showed me their bedroom, still scored and pockmarked by the grenade which a young fascist tossed through the window (he got bail and left the country). On a farm in a remote district one can listen to the 'Agric-Alert' squawking its nightly message of nearby guerrilla attack while those at dinner affect an almost book-learned *sang-froid* and the servants glide about like that James Baldwin scene ('when the black waiter lights your cigar, you can't even see his face. But he can hear every word you say').

The new aspect is this. Whereas journalists used to get easy copy describing white absurdities ('Surrey with the lunatic fringe on top' being, still, the best caption) and whereas the Left has become used to fighting down the years for 'African rights', the struggle has become more and more a battle joined between ethnic elites. The superbly dressed man who lectures you, over the second brandy in the best restaurant, about the menace of Marxism and anarchy is as likely as not, these days, to be black. When James Chikerema and Stanlake Samkange went on, in just these circumstances, to me, they had come respectively from a house in fashionable Highlands and a folly-castle on the outskirts of Salisbury. (Samkange even gave me a lift to Parliament in his Rolls-Royce.) The property transfer pages in the press show a steady growth in the black bourgeoisie and its aspirations, and the abolition of formal racial discrimination means that the location of new black households is in areas which would have called the police two years ago. It is hardly necessary to add that in the Tribal Trust Lands and the quaintly-named 'African Purchase Areas' the 'trickle-down' effect of liberal reform has been somewhere near nil. But among educated Africans, of whom Rhodesia (unlike Mozambique or even Zambia) has an impressive number, there are groups already fighting over the spoils. Aspirations are growing, too, at the bottom. It is not considered polite to refer to them.

Both Chikerema and Samkange said that they had been threatened by Muzorewa since they broke away from him in Parliament to form a party based on their own Zezuru tribe. Both scorn his image as the dog-collared man of meekness and brotherhood. Both speak darkly of his paramilitary youth groups, the 'Eyes of the People' and the 'Spear of the People', which semi-officially invigilate the internal settlement and seem to be taking on the lineaments of a 'Tonton Macoute'. The Reverend Sithole, too, speaks of Muzorewa's 'Gestapo' to me, before he gets into a sleek car and is driven away by men with dark glasses. At least Sithole's party has held a Congress lately, which is more than Muzorewa, despite repeated promises, has yet condescended to allow his flock.

The men, if not their arguments, can be treated with contempt. Sithole and Chikerema in particular have atrocious records of brutality and ruthless double-dealing. Both have dealt in tribal sectarianism as much as, if not more than the Bishop – whose preference for mediocrities from Manicaland is a stock joke which got the *Zimbabwe Times* banned when it printed the names. The point is this. Given that whites have power and responsibility, and given that some Africans have been allowed some responsibility with little power, the internal parties are finding that lack of power corrupts. The slick competition for favours and positions is sickening to watch, and it represents a grave dilution of African dignity which, inevitably, provides good material for the depleted stock of white colonial jokes.

A GOOD WAY of changing the subject in one of these Byzantine booze-ups is to drop the name of Robert Mugabe. People don't exactly cross themselves, but their tone and pitch do alter a little. Who is this guy? Some have met him, others claim to have done.

His 'boys and girls' can strike almost everywhere in the country. They take appalling casualties. The daily 'cross-fire deaths', read out on the news by the delicious Mandy Mundawarara (daughter of the deputy Prime Minister, before you rejoice too much at the promotion of a black newsreader) are grim enough for anybody. One estimate is that 200 people are killed every day; that's probably inflated but the official tally of one an hour is definitely on the low side. Most of the slain are either Mugabe's ZANLA, or what the euphemistic communique calls 'terrorist collaborators'.

There are sufficient people of all colours in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia who have good reasons for not wishing to see a social revolution. It was not just magnanimity which led various black leaders to ally themselves with the same Ian Smith who had once kept them in prison. Mugabe haunts them because he is the only

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leader who has never compromised or wavered. His Savonarola combination of the Catholic missionary with the cosmopolitan Marxist; his refusal to take money; his austerity and ruthlessness command respect and fear. Those who have known or worked with him in the past will display, once they trust you as a listener, an unmistakable excitement, His programme of a 'one party state' is not all that ominous to those who have never known anything else, and if 'Marxism' means exchanging a racist farmer for a Cuban doctor, there are one or two people who cannot detect the flaw in the scheme.

What does does worry and fascinate people is the way in which ZANLA wages total war. The average age of the fighters is very low; their attitude to any farm, school, cattle-dip station or post office is one of unremitting hostility. If it represents the authority of the government, it is treated as a hostile thing embedded in the nation, a 'legitimate target'. There is a slight reminiscence of the Khmer Rouge in all this; a hatred of outside influence and of corrupt cities. FRELIMO never needed much of an urban strategy in Mozambique, because the ghastly Portuguese colonists just packed up and deserted the country once it was no longer theirs to milk. Mugabe has seen how Mozambique now wants skilled people to return. It would be interesting to know what he plans for Zimbabwe in this respect. In the meantime, ZANLA haven't got an urban strategy either, and their pitiless rural campaign must be designed to reduce the towns by sheer attrition.

Never forget, in reading about Rhodesia, that tens of thousands of the young and bright and ambitious have grown up in enforced exile, either in Mozambique or Botswana or Zambia, owing their education and their survival solely to the guerrillas in whose camps they live. They were never 'freely and fairly' asked their opinion about the Bishop, but they intend to express one. When they hear about the lifting of sanctions, they think immediately of how the regime will be able to finance more external arms purchases, and napalm their refuges more efficiently.

When they hear of 'white safeguards' they ask why they should come second in their own country any longer. When they see the countryside reverting to underdevelopment, they are tempted to rejoice that this means they will inherit it. Like Durrutti in Spain, when asked by a liberal correspondent if he did not sicken at the destruction, they reply that they never had anything to lose anyway. The wretched of the earth did not sign up to fight for Wilson's six principles. Nobody has ever shown them any mercy, and in many ways they are more militant than their 'intransigent' leaders. It will be very interesting to see if anybody can 'deliver' them at a conference. They, unlike the whites, do not have the option of 'going home'. That is why they will probably win.

OF COURSE Muzorewa understands that there is a revolution brewing. The poster (see illustration) which he caused to be printed goes to show that much. It's not very long ago that he said:

> In a few years, or even a few months, the government of Rhodesia will be black. We will not forget those who ignored our suffering, scorned our rights and, in complicity with the fascist regime of Mr Smith, took our minerals, bestowing wealth to the white minority and sentencing the black majority to poverty and physical depravity.

In his election campaign he promised 'the fat of the land' to his patient supporters. But ever since then, and especially since the defection of his allies in the transitional government, he has become more than ever dependent on the white bloc; not just in Salisbury but in South Africa itself. In a recent interview, when I reminded him that the Reverend Sithole had just called his government 'an extension of the Rhodesian Front', Muzorewa pointed out quite correctly that Sithole would have behaved in just the same way if he had won the elections. But would Muzorewa not have protested if it had been Sithole who diverted the whole economy into pampering whites and bombing guerrillas? What has become of the 'peace, bread and land' pledges made to expectant Africans? Or, as Muzorewa himself asked at Geneva:

> Can we allow a system which condones violence and torture; where private property is ransacked and confiscated without warrant; where under the pretext of the Law and Order Maintenance Act, Africans are locked up in the so-called 'protected villages' where many of them die from poor sanitation and disease; where Gestapo-like methods of interrogation of suspects are used?

Does Muzorewa mind about the presence of South African troops in his country? Or the subsidy which the apartheid system provides for his budget deficit? How can he expect the Organisation of African Unity, hypocritical as it may be, to take him seriously when new army vehicles on the roads of Rhodesia bear identifying marks from the South African military? The major long-run result of the 'Muldergate affair' is the increase in the specific weight of the armed forces and the extreme Right in South African politics. P. W. Botha's response to the Lusaka agreement, apart from being humorous in its pretended concern for majority rule, makes it clear that his hard line extends beyond South Africa's borders, and into Rhodesia, Namibia and Angola. Is it the Bishop's wish that his country should be absorbed behind Pretoria's defence perimeter? Many Africans voted for him in the genuine hope of a short cut through the nightmare of war, and in the promise that he was on good terms with the guerrillas. Now the permanent staff of the bureaucracy and the army would like to commit them to an open-ended conflict which will span the entire southern cone of Africa. That would be the greatest betrayal of all.

We are now approaching the end of direct European involvement in the government of Africa. Without being too pompous about it, this is the last chance that Britain will ever have to do anything large and decent about her colonial heritage. Until a fortnight ago, Mrs Thatcher was prepared to look at the Rhodesian 'settlement' and pronounce it good, or if not good then good enough for Africans. That moment, at least, seems to have passed.

The settlers have made sure over the years of their monopoly power, that their departing can stabilise the economy. But their exorbitant bluff should now be called. (It might be instructive and sobering for them to look up the Evian agreement on Algeria and see how many 'guarantees' there were for the French *colony* in that document.)

We are at the moment in the middle of what white Rhodesians refer to as 'killing time' – except that they mean the period between July and September before the rains come and provide verdant cover for the guerrilla fighters. In the meantime, every index of misery for the ordinary Zimbabwean, whether it be unemployment, disease, famine or poverty, is going up (see Diana Seager's article below). It will be a disgrace if the new conference breaks down on the non-issues of 'security' and 'safeguards'. Such African promotion as there has been is as much due to whites abandoning their adopted country as it is to any programme for real advancement. The future now is with the young people who gave up everything to fight for their independence. It should be made as easy as possible for them to come into their own – because otherwise there could be an inter-African civil war involving ZANLA and ZIPRA on opposite sides, and the Khmer Rouge tactics could become a strategy. It is not worth risking this in order to appease the people who started the war and the tragedy in the first place. They, and their accomplices, have neither learned nor forgotten anything. In the hour of Rhodesia's greatest extremity, they want the whole world to guarantee them a special place in the society they have brutalised. The answer should be no. As somebody once put it:

> And even in Atlantis of the legend,
> The night the seas rushed in –
> The drowning men still bellowed for their slaves.

SOUTHERN AFRICA 2
Diana Seager

War is taking a heavy toll in Rhodesia's tribal trust lands

Crops fail, children starve

THERE IS A REAL POSSIBILITY of mass starvation in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, especially in the more remote areas. Clinics in the countryside have been sending in consistent reports that malnutrition is on the increase. Cases are being found in adults for the first time, although children and old people are more likely to suffer. With many mission stations closing down, medical care is scarce and inadequate. Indeed, the combined effect of malnutrition and the breakdown in the health service – especially the 'under five' children's clinics – is reported to have increased the incidence of tuberculosis, measles, tetanus and whooping cough.

Many of the 220 protected villages (into which the government has so far moved some 750,000 people) are overcrowded with rudimentary water supplies and sanitation facilities which often constitute a health hazard. Access to these villages is tightly controlled. They are situated quite a distance from the fields and in some cases farmers must trek many miles to tend crops. Curfew hours limit the time worked in the fields and there are restrictions on carrying food to the fields to prevent guerrillas being fed: as a result, the villagers are unable to protect their crops from predators such as baboons. These conditions and, above all, severe drought, have led

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to a dramatic decline in food production. In some places – where planting has been difficult or impossible, or where crops have been destroyed – there have been no harvests at all. The worst hit areas of the country appear to be Binga, Gokwe, Mudzi, Mrewa and Mtoke.

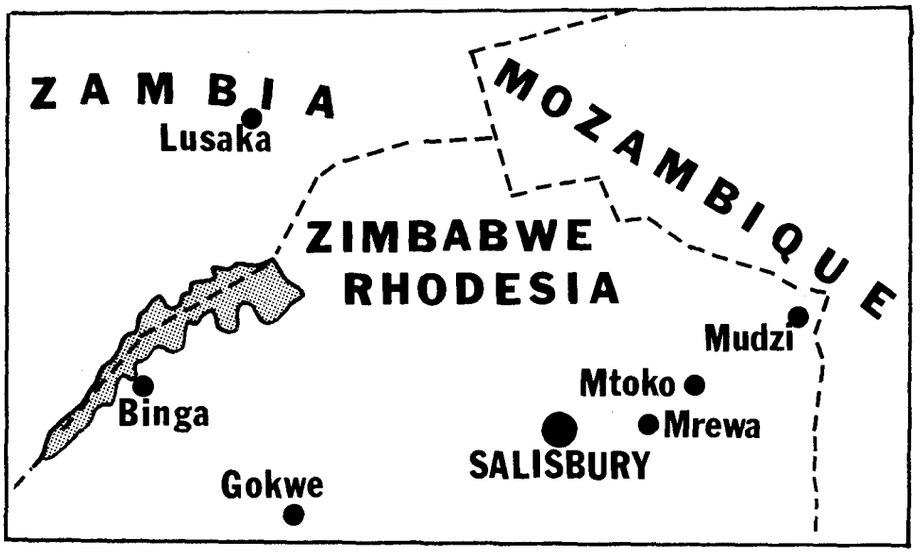
Agricultural output in the tribal trust lands, measured in constant prices, has declined at a rate of 1.4 per cent per annum for the last five years. After the drought in 1967-8, output was 32 per cent below the previous year. The worst drought in the last 15 years occurred in 1972-3, when output dropped by 44 per cent on the previous year. The most recent harvest was adversely affected by a poor rainy season, in which the fall was 40 per cent below normal. It is estimated that output will be similar to the season of 1972-3, but there are now 600,000 more mouths to feed.

In a normal year many of the tribal trust lands have to supplement their home-grown food with maize imported from other parts of the country and with remittances from relatives working in the towns. For some years cotton has been a profitable cash crop in Gokwe, in the north-west of the Midlands; but this year, the guerrillas insisted that cotton crops be replaced by maize. Maize does not do well in that area, and in the absence of cash to purchase food, people have resorted to collecting grass seeds in order to survive.

Since September last year, the transitional government has opened up 79 of the protected villages around Mtoko and Mount Darwin, affecting some 200,000 people. The residents have been allowed to return to their former homes, but many have found them burnt to the ground – a result of the security forces' efforts to prevent guerrillas seeking shelter in abandoned huts. The rains were late and they could not plough their fields; when the rains did come seed was not always available. In addition, many farmers lost their cattle while they were in the protected villages.

To disrupt civil administration in the rural areas, the guerrillas have destroyed the cattle dips which used to be a vital means of preventing infection. Veterinary practices and other measures for preventing disease have been abandoned during the war. The Ministry of Agriculture has estimated that more than one million cattle (approximately 30 per cent of the total herd in the tribal trust lands) have already been lost this year alone, due to tsetse fly, tick fever, foot and mouth, redwater and hartwater disease. Because the cattle are under-nourished, they are all the more susceptible to disease.

APPROXIMATELY 95 PER CENT of the tribal trust lands are now under martial law and about 15 per cent of their inhabitants – half a million people – are living in protected villages. As Christopher Hitchens points out (page 230), under martial law the government is vested with 'full and complete powers and authority to do all things in their judgment proper and necessary' in order to suppress terrorism; and the effect is to give complete and absolute powers to all government agents who might be involved. In order to deter people in the rural areas from co-operating with the guerrillas, punitive action is carried out. What this consists of depends to a large extent upon the interpretation of orders by the leader on the spot. Huts, food, crops and other possessions are destroyed, cattle and chickens are slaughtered and individuals



are beaten and tortured. But at the same time, the guerrillas require the co-operation of the people to continue fighting and in particular they are dependent on them for food. If the people fail to co-operate, they steal their food, burn their huts and torture and kill individuals.

To escape this plight, many have fled the rural areas. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees estimates that in December 1978 there were 100,000 in UN camps in Mozambique, 18,000 in Botswana and 44,500 in Zambia. The actual figures may be much higher now, since the exodus has continued unabated. Many others have fled to urban areas inside Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. In 1978 the Community Services Department of Umtali estimated that it probably had 30,000 war refugees living in the townships of Sakubva and Dangamvura. Bulawayo does not appear to be as badly affected, having no more than 10,000 refugees. Salisbury's refugees are estimated at 70,000 and the number is increasing daily.

The rural population is largely made up of women, children and the very old, which further limits capacity to produce food in the countryside. According to the 1969 census 55.6 per cent of the population of the tribal trust lands were under 15 years old, 26.8 per cent were men and women over 60. Able-bodied men of working age tend to look for jobs in the towns, where low wages and urban insecurity make it difficult for them to bring their families into town. Recently, however, desperate conditions in the rural areas have forced many men to bring in their families, further swelling the ranks of the refugees. In Salisbury the black townships and servants' quarters are grossly overcrowded: refugees stay with relatives whenever possible, but others must resort to living in squatter settlements. In the centre of Harare there are some 7,000 refugees living in makeshift shelters of plastic, cardboard or tin, on plots of five square metres provided with communal water and latrines for which these destitute people must pay one dollar a week; some 10,000 others are sleeping in the open or under whatever shelter they can find.

In the absence of any speedy action by the government, various international and local agencies are trying to provide these refugees with food, clothing and blankets. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) helps those it considers to be genuine refugees - i.e. those without any means of support who have fled the rural areas. Each family gets 10 kilograms of maize meal and 500 grammes of sugar beans per week, and it is estimated that this provides 60 per cent of their food requirements. In addition each individual gets 200 grams of soup a month and each child gets half a pint of milk twice a week. The ICRC has resettled 300 refugee families in relief housing at Seke on the periphery of the city, where in addition to food they have been provided with blankets and seeds. World Vision and Christian Care are involved in relief programmes for refugees elsewhere in the city, World Vision providing 'development relief', in the form of seed and fertiliser (as well as food and blankets) to help people grow their own food. But the efforts of all these organisations can only scratch the surface of the problem.

In the war-torn, drought-smitten rural areas it is government policy to starve the guerrillas out. This policy exacerbates the hardship of the people and adds to their problems of obtaining sufficient food to survive. In theory, each family is limited to carrying up to 10 kilos of maize per week into the tribal trust lands and if they want to take in more they must apply to the District Commissioner for permission. But under martial law these regulations have become irrelevant, because police and military personnel intercept travellers and often confiscate or destroy food they are carrying to their families. The government has closed down stores and grinding mills, which means that people have to travel great distances to buy food, with no guarantee of being able to return with the food once it is purchased. Their very lives are at stake when they make these journeys in war zones under strict curfew. In the country as in the towns, relief agencies have only been able to make a minimal impact.

Fifty-seven per cent of the black population of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia live in the tribal trust lands and for many of them the immediate future seems little more than hopeless. When peace comes, these areas will need massive injections of capital to rehabilitate the people and revive production – but peace may still be a long way off. The next few months will be more difficult than ever as food supplies dwindle. Those who have fled to the towns are more likely to get relief,as their miserable conditions are at least visible. But the plight of many thousands in the rural areas will go unnoticed. If nothing is done for them, they will certainly starve.

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CHARITIES
Christopher Price

Commissioners warn relief agencies to drop 'political' activities

Uncharitable fight against poverty

IF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND is the Tory party at prayer, charities, by and large, represent the CBI at leisure; they are the private sector in England's social fabric and the Charity Commissioners' job is to watch over them and see that they come to no harm. Mr C. P. Hill, former Chairman of the Commission, put the position to a Commons Committee four years ago:

> The Crown is the constitutional protector of charities and undertakes, in substance, to enforce a charitable purpose for ever . . . Since the Crown will prevent its subjects from diverting charity property to other purposes, *a fortiori* it will not itself take part of the capital or income for public purposes chosen by itself instead of those prescribed by the donor . . .

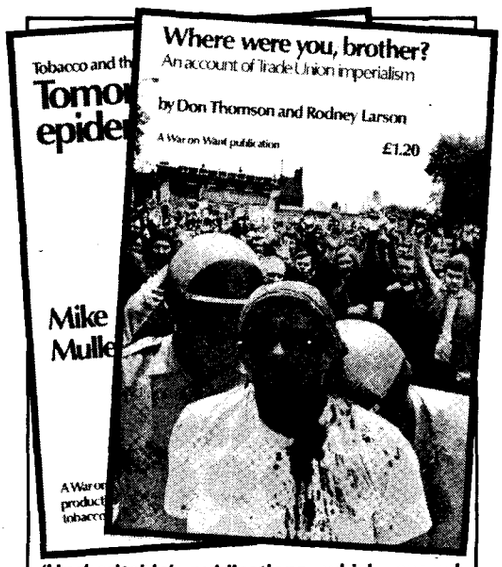
In carrying out this task as surrogates of the Crown, the Charity Commissioners have been deliberately made free from accountability. Their spokesman in Parliament was dropped 70 years ago; only six years ago the Conservatives removed educational charities, including the public schools, from ministerial supervision over their activities; in 1975 the Commissioners were investigated by a House of Commons Committee but four years later the Government has neither taken action nor even commented on the report. To all intents and purposes they are an estate of the realm, interpreting the judgments of the courts to enquirers, and making up law for themselves where the courts have made no decision. Their only general duty is to produce a report once a year for Parliament.

They are at their most assiduous when keeping charities free from the taint of 'politics' as interpreted by them. They include in this year's report[1] a stern warning to three respected overseas aid charities – Oxfam, War on Want and Christian Aid – on the subject of 'political' material put out by them.

At the moment the relationship between charities and politics is governed by a series of none-too-coherent court judgments, about the depth of political water which render the purposes of a charity uncharitable. In 1917 the Secular Society was ruled uncharitable – which seemed somewhat unfair since all religious organisations are *ipso facto* charitable. After the Second World War the National Anti-Vivisection Society went down, along with a couple of altruistic left-wing philanthropists – Hopkinson (1949) and Bushnell (1975) who left their considerable fortunes to socialist adult education and socialised medicine respectively. Perhaps they fondly thought that if the London Clinic and Eton could be charitable, why not some socialist equivalent? The courts ruled both bequests uncharitable and the relatives got the money instead.

The Inland Revenue has been trying to curb charities' tax exemption for over a century but, more often than not, it has been overruled by the courts. It lost the crucial Pemsel case in 1891 when the courts, in effect, substituted for a detailed list of charitable purposes enacted in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and designed to help the poor, a wider definition of 'public benefit' which included help for the rich but precluded 'political' involvement.

[1]HMSO £1.35.


Where were you, brother?
An account of Trade Union imperialism
by Don Thomson and Rodney Larson
A War on Want publication
£1.20

'Uncharitable' publications which earned War on Want a warning

The broad thrust of subsequent decisions has been to hit the Left rather harder than the Right. Eton yes, socialised medicine no. This one-eyed attitude to politics is inherent in the whole philosophy of charity law. When Bernard Shaw wanted to leave his fortune to the simplification of the English alphabet, such an objective was ruled uncharitable on the basic premise of the first of the Appeal Court's 'political' decisions. If it is a *new* idea, no one can tell whether it will be for public benefit. (In practice, of course, charities do innovate – but only if, in doing so, the language they use remains free from Left-wing taint.)

THIS IS THE HOLE that Oxfam, Christian Aid and War on Want have got themselves into. The courts have never pronounced so far on the meaning of politics in an *international* context. Their decisions have always been domestic ones. So the three Charity Commissioners[2] have put on their own quasi-judicial hats and warned these three organisations about some of their current activities and publications. In the case of War on Want they had seen 'complaints' in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Sunday Express*; and in the case of Christian Aid they had received a complaint from the wife of a man engaged in litigation against both Christian Aid and the BBC over its participation in some of the activities of the World Council of Churches. In the case of Oxfam, the Director himself took to the Commission a single item about which he had doubts, which turned out to be a foolish piece of prudence. It earned Oxfam an unhelpful reference in the Commission's Annual Report, which, sandwiched as it was between more serious accusations against the other two charities, was taken up widely by the national and the local press. Covenants and gifts have been lost and a number of trusts have written to say that they cannot help any longer.

The War on Want and Christian Aid cases expose charity law for the absurdity that it is. Experience has taught both charities that they will only relieve poverty in the world effectively if they can attack its roots and explain them to the public. War on Want produced two pamphlets – one on the trade unions, *Where Were You Brother?* and one on multinational tobacco companies, *Tomorrow's Epidemic*. The Commissioners pronounced both 'political', even though both were the product of research – one of the accepted objectives of War on Want. They went on to say that *any* research into the activities of the multinational tobacco companies seemed to them so remote from the causes of poverty that it could not be charitable activity. The World Council of Churches Commission on Churches Participation in Development (supported by Christian Aid) has as its objective: 'to finance political action, mobilise public opinion and effect structural change within societies, in an attempt to tackle those causes of poverty which lie in the economic, social and political structure of communities'. The Commissioners' Report was calculated to give the impression that Christian Aid money had been going to Rhodesian guerrillas. It had not. Two newspapers were forced to apologise in a grovelling manner for their error – an avoidable one if the Commissioners had used any sensitivity in presenting their Report.

The difficulty seems to be this. The advancement of education, research and religion are charitable objectives, and as long as they are advanced on lines not openly associated with the policies of the Labour or Conservative parties, and as long as there is no direct lobbying of Parliament and Government, they can continue to be so. But once it seems to the courts or the Commissioners that a charity has overstepped one or the other of these two boundaries, their objectives cease to be charitable. Or so the theory goes. But in practice, some charities like the RSPCA are so powerful that they can lobby as hard as they like, without criticism. Or take that most powerful charity of all, the Church of England. Whenever there is the merest hint that the Selective Employment Tax, or Capital Transfer Tax or Community Land Tax might erode its economic power, the Archbishop of Canterbury is knocking on the door of No. 10 to plead his cause: and this in spite of the fact that the Commissioners insist that lobbying for the *status quo* is just as unacceptable as lobbying for change.

It costs tens of thousands of pounds to go to the courts to challenge a decision of the Commissioners. Few charities can contemplate the expense. The Select Committee recommended four years ago that test cases should be taken at public expense: as with its other recommendations, there has been no response so far. There was a pledge in the 1974 Labour manifesto to deal with the charitable status of the public schools: once again no action for four years. Any movement on charities tends to upset so many people that reform is just not worth it. In our social fabric, it seems that over the next five years the private sector will be buoyant for charities which toe the line.

[2]Mr Trevor Keith, a one time Inland Revenue official who has been with the Commission for 27 years: Mr Adrian Parsons, a Coutts banker till he joined the Commission fifteen years ago: and the chairman, Mr Terence Fitzgerald, a Home Office mandarin, who was switched from controlling our immigration service to running our charities four years ago.

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London Diary

☐ We don't seem to have heard so much about whales lately. I yield to no one in my admiration of the gentle Leviathan; and what a marvellously harmless cause it provides for moral indignation. If you come out too strongly in favour of human beings you risk all sorts of abuse and unwelcome political affiliations. Even the boat people are a source of deep embarrassment to a generation brought up to regard the present Hanoi government as former martyrs of American Imperialism; but anyone can be on the side of a whale. A whale has neither creed nor colour, it has no capitalist or communist affiliations and you can show it sympathy without having to admit it at Heathrow Airport and find it a job in Birmingham. Whales were accorded a bigger demonstration than the drowning children of South East Asia; and no one was surprised when an enthusiasts' boat rammed a shipload of harpooners; presumably in the hope of killing a few sailors. I was fascinated this week to read an appeal for money to save the whale from an address in Northern Ireland. Do you think they really respect these large and lovable creatures more than each other's knee caps; or is there somewhere a secret plot to turn Greenpeace pounds into Czechoslovak rifles?

☐ Nicolas Walter's entirely religious proclamation of atheism in last week's NEW STATESMAN was a pleasure to read. I have a great admiration for Mr Walter, who, as the undoubted star of the *Gay News* Appeal, helped the learned Lords Justices through that disreputable branch of English law in which Courts have successfully stifled free thought on the grounds that it leads to, in historical order, disrespect for the King, Chartism and sympathy with the French Revolution, jokes in poor taste and homosexual behaviour. Mr Walter's researches produced the *Freethinker* for 1922 and a full report of the disgraceful case in which an elderly man was sentenced to a term of hard labour for saying that Christ looked like a clown when he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. It is a chilling thought that a Judge not known for illiberality, Lord Scarman, apparently approved of this decision in the House of Lords when he said that the crime of blasphemy might be committed by anyone who dealt in a ludicrous way with the main tenets of Christian faith. If this is right the country which so prides itself on its sense of humour is one in which you run the risk of prison for making a joke.

What struck me about Mr Walter's article, however, was how like a creed it read, and how liturgical was the anathema produced on Paul Johnson. And yet the Catholic and the Atheist both proceed entirely by an act of faith and a suspension of disbelief; neither creed can possibly be proved. Although I prefer to be an atheist, I accept that my faith is quite irrational. Atheism, like Catholicism, entails constant if somewhat bewildered thought on the nature of God, and it was remarkable with what reality the Deity emerged from Mr Walter's article. No one would bother to deny the existence of Father Christmas with such passion, or dispute the historical validity of the legend of Sinbad the Sailor with such eloquence. To deny God's existence is at least a sign of respect, and I am tempted to believe that Atheists and Catholics are the most devout citizens: those who have their children christened to please the relatives, swear on the Bible to impress the jury and write C. of E. on their operation forms are, of course, the most irreligious of all.

☐ Unable to write in the last few weeks (something to do with the weather, I suspect, or the advent of a Tory government) I turned unusually to the book reviews and found, as usual, novelists rending each other in a series of hostile notices. This internecine war seems a part of life for novel writers and I wonder if it is really necessary or desirable. Ford Madox Ford describes in his reminiscences calling an elderly French novelist out to a duel because he had made a disparaging remark about Henry James. 'Dog doesn't eat dog if he is a gentlemanly dog,' he wrote in his challenge, and 'One constructive imaginative writer should not write things against another.' Ford was notoriously unreliable and there is some doubt as to whether he actually took to the rapier; but surely the principle is right. Would it not be far better if the lady fiction writers who so delight in wounding each other had an early alarm call, took a bus to Hampstead Heath and shot it out at 20 paces?

☐ The proposal to build a large IBM office block cheek by jowl with the National Theatre has finally condemned the South Bank, and its three concrete palaces of culture, to stand in an area of nightly death. Theatres should exist in a maze of narrow streets, markets and bars. Drury Lane, Covent Garden and the Comédie Française were ideally situated. Even Shaftesbury Avenue has a life of its own, you can get to a pub in the interval (or an all-night chemist) and trip over those Scandinavian tourists whose idea of a happy summer holiday seems to be to sit silently on their rucksacks outside the footwear shop and the off-licence. But IBM is a teetotal company and will not allow a pub as part of its building: so at night the concrete desert will stretch silently, almost from Westminster to Blackfriars, with only a few wilting shrubs in stone pots and empty Coca-Cola tins blowing in the wind with discarded programmes of old Stockhausen concerts to keep each other company.

What town planners need to learn is that architecture depends on life; once ordinary city existence is excluded a place dies. Strangely enough the same effect can be obtained by the banning of motor cars; witness the lugubrious wastes of 'planned inner city shopping areas'. Even Leicester Square has become a desolate place of unspeakable squalor since it was closed to traffic.

☐ The unlovely charge of a 'Conspiracy to Corrupt Public Morals' was invented by the Court of the King's Bench in Charles II's reign to deal with the case of the poet Sedley who, standing on the balcony of a tavern in Covent Garden, pulled down his breeches and 'excrementized in the street'. Since then the courts have used the charge to punish activities of which they disapprove (such as publishing a guide to prostitutes or, in one 1967 case, the selling of chastity belts) even if the conduct in question was not illegal by any Act of Parliament. Now it seems that members of a society which exists to discuss the plight of paedophiles, or suggest changes in the law on that subject, are to be prosecuted for this vague and entirely Judge-made offence. If anyone commits a crime against a child, of course they should be punished; but the charge the DDP has chosen in this case is uncomfortably close to 'Dangerous thoughts'. It could be used to suppress any expression of opinion; a future government might find anarchist or National Front publications likely to corrupt public morals and proceed on a charge which was never approved by Parliament, was entirely disapproved of by such great lawyers as Lord Reid, and carries an undefined penalty.

☐ I learned this week from a radio programme, that many of those Chinese actors who played tyrants and villains were shot after the revolution as an act of political liberation. No doubt it was a tribute to their professional skill; but it is unfortunate for an actor, or a writer, to become too closely identified with a fictional creation. I was sitting moodily in a cell beneath the Old Bailey with an East End totter the other day, waiting for the jury to return, ever a nasty moment in the life of a lawyer or an accused person. This particular customer looked at me with an accusing eye and said, 'Your Mr Rumpole could've got me out of this. Why the hell can't you?'

John Mortimer

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Some years ago anyone who could afford to employ servants was importing Filipinos who, they claimed, made wonderful cooks, nannies, butlers and bottle washers. And I may say it led to some strange food being placed upon one's plate at dinner tables in Knightsbridge. But last week I went to a small dinner party in Chelsea where the food was exclusively Vietnamese, served by a small, beaming boat person. And I think it's safe to predict that now the flow of Filipinos has ceased boat people will become the au pairs of the eighties. – Emma Soames in *Evening Standard* (Mrs L. Wade)

☐ Sentence against Mr Tyrer was postponed for six months by Judge David Wild, who said: 'There is no accounting for the behaviour of people, even less for the behaviour of women.' – *Cambridge Evening News* (John Dick)

☐ A husband who tried to strangle his estranged wife and then threatened to kill himself and their two-year-old daughter was told by the Appeal Court yesterday that he can keep the child for another year. Lord Justice Ormrod said that the court should not place too much emphasis on past behaviour. – *Guardian* (Malcolm Downing)

☐ In jailing him for three years, the Recorder said it would have been double that sentence had it not been for a number of mitigating points raised by his lawyer. The judge said he took into account the pressures imposed on a man of 'inadequate personality' who had recently been released from prison at the time, and of the absence of the sort of sexual unpleasantness that often accompanied rape. – *Wandsworth Borough News* (Jane Carter)

☐ John Hunt, the Conservative MP for Bromley, Ravensbourne, will ask the Minister today how many deaths can be attributed to jogging during the past five years. Mr Hunt, 49, feels the sport may be 'potentially lethal' for middle-aged people and it would be a good idea to put government health warnings on track suits. – *Guardian* (Naomi Harris)

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Why unions want an inquiry into Labour

From David Basnett, general secretary of the General and Municipal Workers' Union

In view of Patrick Wintour's article in your issue of 20 July, and in view of some of the Press comments on the events at and surrounding the National Executive meeting on 25 July, I must set the record straight as far as the position of myself and activities of the Committee of Trade Unionists for a Labour Victory is concerned.

First, in writing to the NEC asking for an Inquiry into the Party organisation, structure and finance, I, as Chairman of the Trade Unionists for a Labour Victory, was acting on behalf of the trade unionists represented on that Committee. We were not acting on behalf of anyone else.

Secondly, the unanimous concern of all members of that Committee – where personal opinions and the generally accepted position of their unions swing from the Right of the Party to the Left – is that a really fundamental look at the Party's structure, organisation and finance is now required.

Thirdly, our request is that there should be an *open-ended inquiry*, with all aspects of the Organisation and Constitution of the Party available for scrutiny. The Trade Unionists for a Labour Victory do *not* have an agreed blue-print for the Party's future structure. Once the Inquiry is established,

David Basnett: The Labour Party 'has failed as an electoral machine'

whilst there will be agreement on some of the major issues, each union will doubtless submit its own proposals – there is no 'Right-Wing' or 'Left-Wing Plot' and no concerted union viewpoint. What the Trade Unionists for a Labour Victory all found difficult to understand was why those seeking fundamental constitutional changes appeared to be resisting the trade union request that these issues should be considered in the context of an overall review of the Party's organisation and constitution. We had no desire to take over the role of the NEC. We hoped the NEC itself, as they have now agreed, would see the need for a thorough going Inquiry. The fact of the matter is that the Party is no longer a mass party, has failed as an electoral machine and needs a new start. Hopefully, the proposed meeting between the Organisation Sub-Committee and the trade unionists will begin the process of rational inquiry into the causes of these failures.

The Trade Unionists for a Labour Victory intends to remain in being and put itself on a constitutional footing to provide permanent help to the Labour Party from the Trade Union Movement. But we do *not* intend that Committee to become a *policy-making* instrument on behalf of *any* wing of the Party. We are there to help the Party — not to take over its role.

Finally, there is, in your article and elsewhere, the assumption that the GMWU are involved in a cabal within the Party. I would like to make it clear that neither in my capacity as general secretary of the GMWU, nor in my capacity as Chairman of Trade Unionists for a Labour Victory, have I been engaged in any attempt to co-ordinate union votes on or against the NEC proposals, or to co-ordinate union voting for NEC members.

The politics of cancer

From Ruth Hall

'Cancer' is an emotive word, but I was still surprised at the blindly flailing reactions to my paragraph (London Diary, 6 July) on the politicisation of cancer. John Mathews argued (NEW STATESMAN, 3 August): 'There is a very sound case . . . for claiming that *most cancer* today is induced through exposure to particular drugs, chemicals or indeed *natural substances*' [added emphases]: a tautology equivalent to arguing that infection causes infection. He then goes on to castigate the pharmaceutical companies, whose profit-oriented drugs are at the root of 'the present epidemic of cancer: it is the only major disease which is on the increase'. (It isn't. Cardio-vascular disease is also on the increase, but never mind.) 'If this is not a political and economic question, what is?' he asked.

Listen closely: it is a scientific question. No oncologist would ever claim that 'most cancer' is caused by any group of precipitating factors (though *particular* cancers are triggered by asbestos dust, cigarette-smoking, aniline dyes etc). Neither would any epidemiologist refer to an 'epidemic' of cancer. Emotional descriptions of scrotal cancer in early nineteenth-century chimney sweeps just will not do. The apparent rise in the incidence of cancer *might* be explained to some extent by the profit motive. It might equally well be ascribed to: (1) the fact that only in the last 40 years has *diagnosis* of many cancers become possible, thus increasing the numbers of those whose death certificates a century earlier might have recorded a non-committal 'wasting away' or 'consumption'. (2) We are living longer. The incidence of cancer is known to increase in a linear relationship with age, being rare before the age of 30 or so. Obviously, the longer we live, the more likely we are to develop cancer. In this sense, Life itself is the ultimate carcinogen.

Cervical cancer, for example, is almost unknown among nuns and other female virgins, the apparent 'cause' being, not industrialised chemicals, but male smegma. As for breast cancer, the commonest malignant tumour in women, or cancer of the prostate in men, there is no evidence that any particular agent is responsible. We just do not know.

Sir Thomas Bazley, in the same issue, called for an explanation as to 'why cancer does not exist everywhere'. In fact, it does; and many studies suggest that, a few tribes apart, the chances of developing cancer are much the same throughout the world, whatever the political system or diet – provided people live long enough to become statistically liable to it.

Why does Maria Fyfe (NEW STATESMAN, 3 August) assume that I disapprove of the rigid control of industrial carcinogens? Quite simply, I do not. I also repudiate her suggestion that I 'have never worked anywhere more dangerous than the NS office'. I used to work in Player's cigarette factory in Nottingham, where a cruel management *forced* me to smoke a free weekly issue of their product. I'll let her know how my lung cancer develops.

13A Pond Street, London NW3

Disaster of the refugees

From William Shawcross

A few points on John Pilger's article 'Revenge on Vietnam' (NS 20 July).

He is quite right that *The Deer Hunter* is a terrible, malicious film and that its widespread acclaim is shocking. He is also right to worry about the shortness of memories: the present turmoil in Indochina can only be understood in terms of its thirty years' war.

He objects to the wording of the Emergency Appeal launched for Indochina Refugees by the Standing Conference on Refugees. This began: 'An Asian Holocaust. The terrible plight of refugees from Indochina is in many ways comparable to the mass persecution of the European Jews in the 1930s.' Mr. Pilger said this was 'to profane the memory of those who were led to the gas chambers of Auschwitz'. A strong charge but fortunately one with which the British Jewish community disagree. The Board of Deputies of British Jews has said that the analogy is correct and that it wishes its name to be used in any future such appeals. I helped write the advertisement; it seemed to us that the parallels were inescapable. At the Geneva meeting on refugees last month many delegates indeed referred to the dreadful precedent of the Evian Conference in 1938, when other nations conspicuously failed to help Jewish refugees.

On US-Vietnamese relations I think it is clear that Carter hoped to normalise in 1977. Talks broke down in good measure because of Vietnam's insistence on 'reparations' – i.e. the aid which Kissinger had covertly, without Congressional approval, promised in 1973. When Vietnam dropped this condition it had become much more difficult politically for Carter to continue towards normalisation. A great misfortune, I agree.

Mr. Pilger dates the beginning of the difficulties for the ethnic Chinese in North Vietnam at this year's Chinese invasion of Vietnam. Not so; the attacks on the Chinese minority had begun well before that and the mass exodus of Chinese from the north began in spring 1978, a good six months or more before the invasion.

There can be no solution to the disaster of the refugees – 'boat' and 'foot' people alike – without an overall political settlement in the area and a massive infusion of international aid to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. But unless there is a huge international relief effort for Cambodia at once, then within a few weeks there will no longer be any 'Cambodia problem' at all. Around 2 million of those who managed to survive Pol Pot are facing famine.

40 Estelle Road, London NW3

Edit as you wish

From Bernard Dixon, editor of New Scientist, and Paul Barker, editor of New Society

Duncan Campbell (NS 3 August) says that *New Scientist* and *New Society* 'Have suffered from increasing management interference in editorial policy'. Having each edited our respective magazines for over a decade, we can state categorically that this is totally false. We enjoy as much freedom in this respect as any other editors we can think of.

Francis Wheen writes: This is a rum do. On 23 March this year I wrote, a short piece in the NS entitled 'Censorship at IPC'. In it I reported that that week's issues of *New Society* and *New Scientist* carried editorials criticising their proprietors, IPC Magazines Ltd. Perhaps I can remind Dr Dixon of what he wrote that week: 'The internal politics of IPC Magazines Ltd are probably of no interest to most of our readers. But readers and advertisers may be concerned to know . . . that decisions about access to the columns of two weekly organs of opinion can now be taken corporately without reference to their editors.' Is he now taking back all he said?

Dropping the medical metaphor

From Anthony Stadlen

Dr R. D. Laing (NS 20 July) writes: 'But suppose we *do drop* the medical metaphor. If the rest of us could recognise that what Szasz is propounding are, of course, eternal verities, then psychiatry would disappear, and with it what he calls anti-psychiatry. What exactly would happen next?' He gives Szasz's answer: 'Specifically involuntary psychiatry, like involuntary servitude, would be abolished, and the various types of voluntary psychiatric interventions would be reclassified and reassessed, each according to its true nature and actual characteristics. Some of these practices might then reemerge as medical interventions, perhaps vis-à-vis persons who do not suffer from demonstrable bodily illnesses – a practice by no means limited to psychiatry. Most psychiatric practices, however, would either disappear or reappear as ethical and political interventions.' Laing comments: 'It sounds as though it would all be much the same. It makes one wonder what he is making all the fuss about, whether he is

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LETTERS

The pint that satisfies

From Colin Madden, director-general of the Brewers' Society

Britain has a larger variety of beers on general sale than anywhere else in the world. They vary vastly in strength, style and, most importantly, price, and in most pubs at least 19 of these different beers will be offered, seven of them on draught. It is from this huge range that the customer freely exercises his personal choice.

It is difficult, therefore, to see the logic of your lager article (NS 28 July) and its conclusion that the millions of lager drinkers are the victims of 'cynical manipulation' by brewers. Indeed, as more than seven-out-of-ten pints of beer drunk in Britain are not lager anyway and are, in fact, stouts, milds and bitters, and one is left wondering what all the fuss is about. Nevertheless, here are a few basic points:

The 'hairy-chested machismo image' – lager ads are mostly based on beer's refreshing quality and are usually lighthearted. The 40 brewers who produce over 85 brands of lager must advertise to win a share of this growth market, a necessary and proper function in a free market economy. Overall, beer advertising costs about one-fifth of a penny per pint.

'Those Germans and Danes' – many lagers are promoted in a continental context, just as most perfumes have a touch of the French about them. But many ads and every can and bottle prominently display where the beer is brewed. Some lager brand-leaders have decidedly British names, anyway.

Strength – many of the popular lagers are of equivalent strength to main line bitters; some lagers are less strong and since this is often a young person's drink, this is desirable. Were brewers to increase alcohol strength overall they would come

'Many ads . . . prominently display where the beer is brewed'

under attack from other quarters on social grounds. Your article ignored the fact that most pubs offer a choice between at least two and often three or four lager brands of different strengths and qualities.

Price – lager costs appreciably more to produce mainly because of the three-to-12 weeks maturation period at refrigerated temperatures which is expensive in both plant and energy input, as is the need to store huge quantities to meet the sudden weather-created sales peaks. The Price Commission has investigated the industry as a whole and three major brewers in detail. It has granted virtually all price increase applications and has reported nothing to suggest that brewery company overall prices, profits, profit margins and return on capital are other than reasonable. This is the test, not what is charged on an individual product.

Quality – with over 2,000 years of tradition the British brewing industry is renowned the world around and your correspondent's gratuitous insults are greatly resented by its 68,000 workers. More than in any other country, British brewers are directly involved with their product right through to the point of dispense and work closely with licensees to maintain quality. Foreign firms who have licensed their products to British brewers monitor production and none would tolerate the association of their brands' names with beers that were inferior.

Market 'control' – with nine major and many small firms a market cannot by definition be termed 'controlled'. What other consumer industry has so many major producers – cars, milk, sugar, bread, biscuits . . .?

'The demand for real ale has been the only clear demand from drinkers in the Seventies.' Cask-conditioned milds and bitters have remained at about 15% of beer sales throughout the decade and as the total market has gone up, this represents a modest volume increase of about 16%. In the same period, lager has gone from 10% to 27%, a near trebling in market share and has increased its volume sales by over 400%.

Finally, lager drinkers are currently consuming well over 3,000 million cool, refreshing pints a year and on a summer's day this represents a drinking rate of more than a million pints for every hour of pub opening time for lager alone. No market could exist and grow on such a scale unless brewers were producing brands which meet the customer's taste. Indeed, if Britain's brewers had not responded so effectively to the swing to lager, the market would have been attacked by imported brands at considerable cost to the country's balance of payments. The beer market here has remained 95% British, and that can hardly be said of many others, such as cars, textiles, and domestic appliances. The brewing industry is proud of its achievement.

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not making a sort of fetish out of the medical metaphor, and a scapegoat out of psychiatry.'

Dr Laing's new role as the 'perfectly decent' defender of psychiatry against Szasz's 'insulting and abusive' 'fuss' calls for comment. Laing is saying, unequivocally, that 'it would all be much the same' to him whether involuntary psychiatry be retained or abolished. He is saying 'it would all be much the same' whether voluntary interventions, including his own, are intended as medical treatments for illness or as interpersonal counselling, ethical exploration, existential analysis. He implies quite clearly that he is one of 'the rest of us' who do use the medical metaphor. For one like myself who has never used the medical metaphor in my practice it would indeed be exactly the same if the medical metaphor were dropped. But this is not Laing's position.

I am indebted in my work to Szasz's pioneering work *The Myth of Mental Illness* (1961) and to Laing and Esterson's *Sanity, Madness and the Family* (1964) where Szasz's book is acknowledged. Laing and Esterson present eleven 'schizophrenics', first from the medical 'dis-vantage point' and then from a social phenomenological viewpoint. The difference is revelatory. As they say: 'We can now begin to make sense of what psychiatrists still by and large regard as nonsense.' They claim with justice: 'We believe that the shift of point of view that these descriptions both embody and demand has an historical significance no less radical than the shift from a demonological to a clinical viewpoint three hundred years ago'. Dr Laing's present position clearly implies that he now believes his work of 1964 to be gravely mistaken. What reasons have led him to this remarkable conclusion?

64 Dartmouth Park Road,
London NW5

Mr Mullin's farewell

From H.C. Mullin

I looked at Ralph Steadman's cartoon from California (NS 27 July) with deep puzzlement. 'How is it', I thought, 'that one who corresponds regularly in the pages of a Left-wing publication like the NEW STATESMAN, as Mr Steadman surely does, can get a visa to enter the United States, while law-abiding and compassionate proletarians like Mullin are refused?' I reasoned that surely a Left-wing Socialist must be considered a threat to the Capitalist society that is Li'l ol' USA.

As I read on into the pages of the NS I found the answer. It was contained in Paul Foot's 'London Diary'. The US authorities recognise a kinship in hypocrisy with the trendy, middle-class types who write in your pages. There is no need for them to fear folk like Paul Foot. After all, folk who have no moral scruples about calling a tiny baby in the womb a 'foetus', and who use the immense indignation stirred up by the revelation of the brutal and savage demise of one (just one) as an example of the perfidy of the Capitalist press, are unlikely to have any strong moral reservations about spraying Vietnam with arsenical compounds, which kill similar foetuses in the wombs of women living in that far-off land. Surely if it is the right of women in Britain to dispose of a living, kicking foetus dwelling in the womb, it cannot be wrong for US males with general's stars to make a similar choice in Vietnam?

Mr Foot should ask permission to visit a hospital and see the fate of a 23-26 weeks-old 'foetus' being aborted. He will see the emergence of a tiny pear-shaped head, which shows a great pulse beating just below the surface of the head where the skull-bones have not yet joined together. The head will have eyes, ears, a nose, a wrinkled, helpless-looking tiny little face with a mouth which betrays a hair-lip. Then will come forth shoulders, a body and arms, tiny hands up at the mouth sucking fingers, legs and tiny little feet. It will bear a remarkably close resemblance to a baby; but we must not call it such. Those cries, that weak movement, the urine flowing freely are just 'foetal' manifestations; nothing more.

In a few years' time (if it had been a baby) he/she would be winning cash from his/her father for reciting verses from dad's favourite poem just like Mr Foot's wee lad does – because he was not aborted.

Paul Foot, and all the other abortionists who write in and to the NEW STATESMAN have one thing in common with the Nazis and Stalinists they purport to despise for their behaviour. These callous killers called the object of their aversion 'Jews' and 'kulaks'. This was sufficient to de-humanise them, and justify their extermination. The hypocritical abortionists have taken a leaf out of the countless books of the dead from Nazism and Stalinism. They call babies 'foetuses'. This allows them to kill them off with good conscience.

This is the last time I shall purchase your journal. To think when I first read it just a few short months ago I thought I had found a straight-speaking, Left-wing publication. I actually was gullible enough to swallow myself to be deceived into thinking that we might have common Socialist concerns. What a clown I was. Whenever I hear the name NEW STATESMAN mentioned in my presence from henceforth, it will release within my mind the memory of your sickening hypocrisy.

970 Maryhill Road, Glasgow.

Invincible Ockham

From Nicolas Walter

Despite Andrew Robertson's letter (NS 27 July), it is both common and correct to spell William of Ockham thus. Occam is the Continental spelling, based on the latinised form of his birthplace, which was Ockham in Surrey. Why shouldn't the Invincible Doctor, who was one of the greatest early English philosophers, even if he did write in Latin and live in France and Germany, be known by his English name?

134 Northumberland Road, Harrow, Middlesex.

Left Book Club

From A.T.B. Evans

I am doing research on the Left Book Club and shall be very glad to hear from any members of the club who will be good enough to help with information or reminiscences. Postage will be repaid.

45 Manor Road, Ashford, Middlesex.

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

Walkabout

I have, at 'Myrtlebank', access to five bedrooms of varying sizes, none of them large, but in point of fact it was the smallest of the lot that I chose for myself. I prefer a bijou bedroom. Snugger. Everything to hand. One has merely to reach out and that freshly laundered pair of cerise Y-fronts is there. I suppose that if I went to a professional trick-cyclist for an explanation of this preference, I should eventually pay him £874 and he would finally tell me, nodding sagely, that I have a womb-complex. Well, why not? It was cosy there all right, as far as one can recall. Another advantage that the room possesses is that one of its windows looks out over both the spacious garden and the orchard, where a pair of odious magpies are currently availing themselves of buckshee pickaback rides on the uncomplaining sheep, and from my bed I can see, beyond the apple trees and the village road, the steeply climbing wooded hill that goes up and away into the horizon and becomes, before very long, Dartmoor. The rising sun hits the hill fair and square and lights up the tree-tops and there are less agreeable sights to see on waking. As so often, I count my blessings ('483, 484, 485 . . .').

It is my custom, first thing, to switch on the bedside wireless (Radio 3, natch) which, in addition to its innumerable musical pleasures, both intentional and unintentional (*such* lovely muddles, and very occasionally the wrong record put on at the wrong speed), has a delightfully short news bulletin, a mere five minutes or so of depression. Listening to the 8 a.m. news the other day, with half an ear (some blessed physical reaction induces in me a partial deafness when there is any mention of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, unions, Leyland and something called 'the shopfloor', where everybody seems to be almost permanently ratty), I suddenly heard the words 'tangerine oranges' and 'eucalyptus'. Though instantly put on the alert by even a mention of such unusual and welcome news items (eucalyptus is, as you'll know, a member of the myrtle family and therefore of especial interest here), I missed the full drift and had, all excitement and attention, to wait eagerly until the repeat at 9 a.m. I then found that it is hoped that, when all the oil and petrol has been idiotically wasted and squandered and has finally run out, a propulsive power in liquid form can be obtained from both these jewels in the crown of the vegetable world.

In the case of tangerine oranges, I fancy they must mean tangerines in their natural and fresh-off-the-tree, more or less, Christmassy state rather than those attractive little segments that come in tins and find their way eventually into small glass 'sweet' bowls where they breathe their last, smothered beneath a foamy cloud of synthetic cream. As with eucalyptus, it must be some substance that is squeezed from the bark of the tree, or collected in a cup, like gum, or pressed from the skins, or distilled from the stalks. Or something. Anyhow, hooray for it. As the only other alternative propulsive power that I know of, and which isn't going to run out, is the fumes from chicken dung, oranges are a pleasant variant. A crate of tangerines on the car roof is aesthetically more pleasing and in other ways, not the least of which is hygiene, greatly preferable to a coop of clucking Wyandottes forgetting themselves.

However, and although I myself shall never live to see 4 Star Tangerine being dispensed at the pumps, any propulsive power that removes the necessity to walk is quite all right with me. One of the great hazards of spending country week-ends with kind friends is the dread Sunday morning phrase 'Care for a stroll?' (any host who issued the invitation on a Sunday afternoon would automatically be condemning the quality and calorie-content of the lunch, together with the volume of wine. Sunday afternoons are one of the very few of God's sensible creations and are for snoozing in). Max Beerbohm, a wise authority on many subjects, his thoughts expressed in a prose so perfect that it is an audacity even to mention him on this page, was not at all in favour of walking in company ('My objection to it is that it stops the brain'). Sir Max considered that the liveliest minds become leaden, the most sparkling eyes become dimmed as the bodies containing them trudge along, grimly reading out whatever notices they chance to see ('Uxminster. 11 miles'). At boarding schools it was considered essential, and for both sexes, to take a bracing hour and a half walk on a Sunday. Inactivity was perilous. Heaven knows what unscheduled activities might not follow.

And now, bless me, here comes a book called quite simply *Walk!,* rather a peremptory, not to say impertinent, title I would have thought. The sub-title is 'It Could Change Your Life' (in my case by removing it) and Paddington Press sell it at £4.95 a time. Never mind. Its author, John Man, looks immensely jolly and the numerous illustrations show him walking like mad in all directions, the very picture of bouncing health. Although the well-named Mr Man lives with his family in the Oxford area, he is, I fancy, American (the word 'humour', of which there isn't really all that much, comes out as 'humor') and, anxious for us to share his enthusiasms, details the pleasures of walking in what one would have thought of as being the least profitable of places. There is a happy snap of beefy Mr Man striding out down New York City's Sixth Avenue and 'sensing the human pulse of a supposedly impersonal city'. This novelty is followed by a vibrant *pensée* from somebody called Donald Culross Peattie (why can so few Americans settle for just the two names?) in his book *The Joy of Walking:* 'To enjoy City walking to the utmost you have to throw yourself into a mood of loving humanity.' Yes indeedy. The next time D. C. Peattie is in London, let him test his love of humanity among passengers attempting to buy tickets for the Northern Line during the rush-hour at Tottenham Court Road Underground Station.

Further *pensées* dot the text and before long we come upon one of those alarming 'tables', devised in this case and with the best intentions by the Michigan Heart Association and which are intended to be a rough guide (using age, weight, habits, etc) to help you to determine whether or not your current life style is going to bring you, sooner or later, to a sudden seizure. The table is headed 'Are You At Risk?' Well, er, sort of. Nor is one's peace of mind increased by what follows – another table called 'The Rahe Stress Index'. Life's possible misfortunes and stresses are listed, with their seriousness allotted score marks in brackets, maximum 100. For example, and from a list that ranges widely, we find Change in Residence (20), Jail Term (63), Death of Spouse (100), Foreclosure of Mortgage (31), Trouble with the Boss (23) and Christmas (12). The total stress should not ideally come to more than 100 a week and, as you see, if at Christmastime your spouse has passed across while you are in jail, which itself involves a Change of Residence, you're in trouble.

I am not myself really tremendously keen on helpful Mr Man's suggestion for finding out whether one is plump or not ('Assessing Your Fat Content' is, I fear, the title of this section). It is called the 'inch-of-pinch test'. 'Find a book an inch thick' he says (I hovered between *The Card* and *Precious Bane,* finally settling for *The Daisy Chain),* 'then take the flesh at the side of your waist between your thumb and index finger. If the fold is more than an inch thick . . .'. Need I say more? 'Each inch is estimated to equal forty pounds of fat.' Another method of testing, though hardly more acceptable, is to use 'skin-fold calipers' with two pincers or arms that 'lock onto the fold of skin in such a way that you can record the size of the gap in between the two pincers.'Then hasten to your table showing the 'Skin-fold Conversion Factors' and learn the worst.

Not even a flowery *pensée* which goes 'The magic of the moccasin still makes good medicine' is going to change my non-walking habits. But if I am ever by mistake coaxed out against my will (the Bultitudes are for ever shrieking 'Join us for a tramp' over the hedge), I have thought of a splendid method of revenge. Reverting, and without difficulty, to childhood, I shall, after 400 yards, sit down by the side of the road and say 'I'm tired. Carry me.'

Roger Woddis

Line of enquiry

'There is no evidence of a racial motive.' – A Scotland Yard spokesman on the murder of a Pakistani in a London Tube train.

They kicked him laughingly in the head,
And left him maimed and dying,
But a highly respectable spokesman said,
'We understand the man is dead;
He should have stayed at home in bed,
There's little use denying.
We've ruled a racial motive out,
To show we're boxing clever.
Of that there is no manner of doubt,
No probable, possible shadow of doubt –
No possible doubt whatever.'

It's wise, of course, to be on guard
When jumping to conclusions,
But there are facts we can't discard,
And some will find it terribly hard
To fathom the mind of Scotland Yard,
Or share in their delusions.
Oh, you can argue till you're blue,
But you'll convince them never,
For though the charge is patently true,
Our baffled policemen haven't a clue,
No possible clue whatever.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

A. S. Byatt

The Power of Learning

Letters: Vols VIII and IX by GEORGE ELIOT edited by Gordon S. Haight *Yale* £21.60 each
The Art of Allusion in Victorian Fiction by MICHAEL WHEELER *Macmillan* £10
The Victorian Historical Novel by ANDREW SANDERS *Macmillan* £8.95
Picturing: Description and Illusion in the 19th-Century Novel by MICHAEL IRWIN *Allen & Unwin* £8.50

George Eliot was not, I have always thought, one of the very great letter-writers. Unlike Keats or Byron she felt no apparent need to pour excess wit and energy into correspondence: unlike Coleridge she had no need to display her loneliness, genius, rectitude or despair to many other people. A large number of those of her letters we have are courteous, cautious, constrained, judicious responses to requests for things ranging from intellectual references to whole-hearted love; from commitments to feminism, the Comtean religion of humanity or phrenology, to commitments to provide stories or poems, or correct proofs. Her letters convey the impression that she talked so much about illness – hemicrania, kidney trouble, prostration – because she wrote letters either when she was not quite well enough to do what she really cared to do, or when she had excuses to make. And then, as with all 'complete letters', the most vital are often missing. As Professor Haight points out, G. H. Lewes's letters to George Eliot were packed by her to be buried with her. Barbara Bodichon, a woman with whom she felt free to joke and drop her mask, seems to have preserved many fewer letters than Sara Hennell, whose religious and moral intensities obviously increasingly constrained and worried her eminent correspondent.

Nevertheless, Gordon Haight's scrupulous, erudite, and imaginatively edited nine volumes are very illuminating and pleasurable to read. We now have two new volumes, which contain, as he tells us, 'frankly supplementary' letters: correspondence discovered since the earlier volumes appeared, letters by other writers and a much-desired index. To read the whole story of the life in the letters is an experience different from reading a biography. The 'strong-minded woman' who nevertheless needed some one person to lean on, tactfully described by Professor Haight the biographer, is more elusive but also more powerful and more immediately present in the letters when she does appear. One's idea of George Eliot is of a woman whose appearance of profound moral scrupulousness, self-discipline and intellectual rigour was not an illusion but a partial truth. She was also passionate, violent, very fierce and as extraordinarily rapid and energetic intellectually as she was minute and exact. Some of these new letters cast fresh light on these aspects of her. Professor Haight's particular triumph is the discovery of her letters to Herbert Spencer, written in 1852 when it was rumoured that the two were engaged. Professor Haight's search for them began, he tells us, in 1937, and was hindered by the British Museum's scruples about confidentiality. The most startling is a passionate plea whose language is partly that of the Maggie Tulliver whose needs, and failures of renunciation, George Eliot was later to portray with such sympathetic irony. It is also, as Haight says, the work 'not of a romantic adolescent, but of a desperately earnest woman 32 years old'.

> I want to know if you can assure me that you will not forsake me, that you will always be with me, as much as you can and share your thoughts and feelings with me. If you become attached to someone else, then I must die . . . I do not ask you to sacrifice anything – I would be very good and cheerful and never annoy you . . . I have struggled – indeed I have – to renounce everything – be entirely unselfish, but I find myself utterly unequal to it. Those who have known me best have always said that if ever I love any one thoroughly my whole life must run upon that feeling, and I find they said truly . . . I suppose no woman ever before wrote such a letter as this – but I am not ashamed of it, for I am conscious that in the light of reason and true refinement I am worthy of your respect and tenderness whatever gross men or vulgar-minded women might think of me.

Literally beside these passionate letters appear a number of new letters to George Combe the phrenologist, written by Marian Evans the editor of the Westminster Review, graceful, highly efficient, measuring the Victorian intellectual climate, the weight of the contents of a particular issue of the review, and the mental range and capacities of contributors with an incisiveness that is a pleasure in itself. Combe's shock at her elopement with Lewes (not so long after the letters to Spencer) is also more fully documented, and in retrospect comic, as we read Lewes's accounts of the couple's increasing social eminence. Letters are always better than fiction to read for the narrative of shock and surprise, comic or tragic: the deaths of Lewes's sons here again amplified – we have Herbert Lewes's painfully cheerful unfinished last letter – are only less wholly startling than the deaths of Lewes and George Eliot themselves, who seem eternal on one page, in their daily preoccupations, and are suddenly forever absent on the next. This shock – and the need to convey it – seems to me the best justification for Professor Haight's inclusion of selected parts of Edith Simcox's *Autobiography of a Shirtmaker* with its intelligent, obsessed account of a lesbian passion for an elderly lady novelist alternately tolerant and obviously irritated. Much of this material has been used before but it is worth having Miss Simcox's account of George Eliot after Lewes's death 'doing conic sections every morning because "she didn't want to lose the power of learning" '. This Miss Simcox took as evidence that 'she has a spring of vitality in her that makes her winter less barren than my prime'.

And then there is the novelist: what do we learn about her from these last two volumes? Emily Davies, founder of Girton College, described her conversations with Mrs Lewes in letters printed here; of particular interest is a lucid account of George Eliot's cultural-historical intentions in *The Mill on the Floss* and her statement that 'her own experience [of conflict with narrow elders] was worse'. Also interesting is George Eliot's expression of a dismay, amounting to nausea, at 'the quantity of second rate art everywhere about' with 'such a quantity of dialogue about everything, every hole and corner being ransacked, every possible incident seized upon'. She begged Emily Davies, as teacher, to 'advise against indiscriminate reading'.

Much time and reading, discriminate and indiscriminate, has passed since the founding of Girton College and Maggie Tulliver's obsession with *Pilgrim's Progress*. If the Victorian novel was late in being analysed, critics have now made up for lost time, and it is possible to feel a dismay at the amount of second-rate description of second-rate art now everywhere about, as academics hunt for new subject matter or methodology.

George Eliot wrote to George Combe in 1853 that 'given sparingly, quotations serve admirably as a climax or as a corroboration, but when they are long and frequent, they seriously weaken the effect of a book. We lose sight of the writer . . .' Michael Wheeler has chosen to study the art of allusion in Victorian fiction – including references to people as types (Casaubon as 'our Lowick Cicero') as well as directly embedded borrowings from other texts, acknowledged or unacknowledged. He studies the pattern in which Jane Eyre works her reading of *Pilgrim's Progress* into her own story, Mrs Gaskell's Biblical emphasis in *Mary Barton* and Dickens's in *Hard Times*. He then considers *Middlemarch* and *The Egoist* as books which are in quite different ways books about books, and discusses the use of books to study life (Casaubon as a wrong-minded quoter who had no other vitality, Dorothea as a reader who moves beyond literary images, *The Egoist* as a fictive world parodying other fictive worlds). He supplies many new moments of insight, though I think he does not quite deal with the problem of what the Victorian writer could, or need, or did expect the Victorian reader to recognise, and how much it matters. Although he is good on the Victorian habits of collecting 'wise witty and tender sayings' from the works of George Eliot and others, and on the novelists' habit of including chapter mottoes in their texts – sometimes quotations, sometimes made-up bits of ancient literature to suit the occasion – he seems to write with an uneasy eye on those cross modern students who in increasing numbers express righteous indignation about the number of books Milton (or even T. S. Eliot) expects us to know. George Eliot's erudition is heavily documented by scholars: students, I think, like to read Victorian novels because they can do so without coming to terms with the erudition. Dr Wheeler, who is aware it is there, is not sure how to deploy his awareness without alienating his readership. His best chapter, in my view, is on Mrs Humphry Ward's *Robert Elsmere*, a didactic but gripping account of a Victorian clergyman's loss of faith. He quotes with feeling Mrs Ward's comment that 'I had to learn that, having read a great deal, I must as far as possible wipe out the traces of reading. All that could be done was leave a

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few signposts as firmly planted as one could . . .' Dr Wheeler describes signposts, in *Hard Times* and *Mary Barton* particularly, that to describe in earlier days would have been to warp and distort. But we do not now know our Bible and his new signposts are probably necessary.

Mrs Ward also brought up in *Robert Elsmere*, as Dr Wheeler shows, the Victorian preoccupation with *testimony*, the evidence for historical and religious belief. Andrew Sanders, in his book on the Victorian historical novel, tackles Bulwer Lytton, Kingsley, Dickens, Thackeray, Reade, George Eliot's *Romola*, Mrs Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers* and Hardy's *Trumpet-Major* as examples of a Victorian preoccupation with the depiction of the past which we have recently found alien and trivial, apart from in Lukács' great book *The Historical Novel*. Dr Sanders does not dispute Lukacs' contention that the historical novel sprang from Scott's genius and his depiction of societies in political and cultural shifts, compromising and reforming. He does suggest that the English tradition of historical fiction does not follow the political pattern Lukács traces through Stendhal, Balzac and Tolstoy – he is good on things like Thackeray's refusal to make Esmond an exemplum or type, or Mrs Gaskell's determined emphasis on personal and provincial problems within a delicately distanced political-historical frame. Like Roy Strong's excellent *And When Did You Last See Your Father?* which reappraises and admires the whole Victorian interest in antiquarianism and eclectic cultural imitations, Dr Sanders's book examines the liveliness or failure to come to life of carefully researched places and moments. Harrison Ainsworth's *Tower of London* does not increase our knowledge of our roots, or of human violence. Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* does. Dr Sanders's interests are primarily literary-critical. In the end he judges the value as literature of his chosen texts, and tells us *Romola* may after all be a masterpiece – a tenable view. But there is still a large book to be written about the Victorian obsession with the nature of history of all kinds – geological, religious, anthropological, cultural, political – and its effects on art. Such a book would have to deal with the complexities of Browning's historical range, and George Eliot's interest in Riehl's deliberately provincial *Natural History* of German life, or religious histories of Judaism, and secularising histories of Christ, with Darwin, Lyell, the Bridgwater Treatises, as well as Scott and Carlyle, with whose formative influences Dr Sanders does make his readers acquainted.

Dr Sanders and Dr Wheeler have written good academic pieces of research. Michael Irwin's book on description and illusion in the 19th-century novel looks at first sight like a more conventional piece of literary criticism, textual analysis of which we vaguely feel we have lately had too much. It is not. It is a most unusual and exciting book, written, as Michael Irwin says, both for writers and for readers of fiction, and is one of the few books that I think genuinely *ought* to be read by both. He raises the simple but fundamental problem for the realist novelist of the technical means by which writer ensures that reader *imagines* his world. His chapters move steadily outwards – from face, to gesture, to clothes, to rooms and houses, to imaginary villages and towns. His method is to preface each chapter with a series of excellently chosen pieces of description – mostly from Dickens, Eliot, Hardy and other major Victorians, but including odd provocative bits of Erving Goffman, Iris Murdoch and others, and then to discuss how they work. This is an almost impossible task and is brilliantly done.

Mr Irwin is good on Grandcourt's gestures and why his immobility and Gwendolen's edgy movement indicate and conceal the sadistic marriage that is to follow. He is splendid on the 'absence', so dramatically necessary, of Emily Brontë's Gimmerton, to which her characters, but not her readers, go. He is right, surely, about the simple fact that a writer has more control over a reader's imagination of face and gesture than of house, let alone town or city. George Eliot told Emily Davies that 'she herself is obliged to see and feel every minutest detail' of her stories. G. H. Lewes, in his brilliant piece on Dickens, wrote, 'Psychologists will understand both the extent and the limitation of the remark when I say that in no other perfectly sane mind (Blake, I believe was not perfectly sane) have I observed vividness of imagination approaching so closely to hallucination'. He says later, 'this glorious energy of imagination is that which Dickens had in common with all great writers'. There are letters from Lewes in these latest volumes defending this article from the charge that it was disparaging because he did not detect 'a single thoughtful remark on life or character' such as his wife might have written, in Dickens. But he did detect genius in energy of imagination. Because he was right, and because Mr Irwin has energy of imagination, also necessary in a critic, *Picturing* is required reading.

Anthony Quinton

Further Chomsky Tremors

Liberty and Language by GEOFFREY SAMPSON *Oxford* £5.75
Language and Responsibility by NOAM CHOMSKY *Harvester* £10.50 and £3.95
Writing and Difference by JACQUES DERRIDA *Routledge* £12.50
The Rule of Metaphor by PAUL RICOEUR *Routledge* £9.50

One of the themes of Geoffrey Sampson's *Liberty and Language* is the essential unpredictability of human action. His own book is itself remarkably unpredictable, being an attack on Noam Chomsky's politics mounted by a linguist who agrees with Chomsky's theory of language. In particular, he is concerned to deny that Chomsky's views about language give any support to his political convictions. According to Sampson, Chomsky claims that 'the revolutionary political ideas he advocates follow as a natural corollary of the view of human nature suggested by his academic research on syntactic structure in human language'. But in *Language and Responsibility*, the somewhat remote outcome of conversations in 1976 with a French linguist, Mitsou Ronat, Chomsky allows only a very indirect connection between his ideas about language and his political convictions. 'In some measure', he says, 'they perhaps derive from certain common assumptions and attitudes with regard to basic human nature.'

In the face of that, and the admittedly small amount of space in which Chomsky concerns himself in any way with the connection between his linguistics and his politics, the project of Sampson's book might seem a bit odd. It is perhaps enough for him that Chomsky's great intellectual prestige, deservedly obtained in the field of syntax, might secure undeservedly respectful attention to his political writings. At any rate he does not work too hard at the matter of justifying his choice of Chomsky as the target for his lively right-libertarian or free-enterprise polemic against left-wing authoritarianism. What probably gets Chomsky into Sampson's sights is the fact that Sampson is also a linguist and that he agrees with the most concrete and scientifically secure part of Chomsky's work: the theory that all human languages, despite their surface differences, share certain universal features of syntax, limiting the ways in which words can be combined to form admissible sentences.

On the other hand he passionately disagrees with Chomsky's politics. The equality that is part of Chomsky's ideal could be achieved only by suppressing or failing to cultivate the kind of freedom on which human progress has depended and will continue to depend. Sampson, insistent at once on the supreme value and irregular distribution of human creativity, wants as little interference with it, above all by the state, as possible. Chomsky goes wrong, he holds, in taking creativity to be what human beings exhibit in learning their native language, bringing their innate capacity for language-acquisition to bear on the scrappy fragments of utterance they encounter in experience. Although, Sampson agrees, we make a lot out of a little in learning our original language, the sort of creativity that requires liberty as classically defined is something much rarer and is not a possible topic of scientific explanation and description.

In a manner that is rather persuasive to the amateur in this field, Sampson argues that as language-users we are creative in his full, non-predictable sense, in the realm of meaning that is covered by semantics. Many sentences have become meaningful with the passage of time that once were senseless, although perfectly all right from the point of view of syntax. If he is right about this, as is rather suggested by the failure of any kind of universal semantics to emerge, Chomsky's inference, from the quite well-confirmed hypothesis that the syntactical aspect of our language-learning capacity is innate to the conclusion that our cognitive or intellectual outfit in general is also innate, comes to grief.

Sampson's book is written with great verve and should be exhilarating even to those least attracted by its genially piratical social doctrines. It has an open and breezy aggressiveness often to be found in Australian controversial writing. All but the most pious must enjoy the cheek with which he sets about the

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very marked vein of glazed self-righteousness in Chomsky's performance as a social prophet. He deals convincingly with Chomsky's lofty dismissal of IQ research as being devoid of both scientific and social interest. With some ingenuity he makes a case for seeing Chomsky's insistence that no country should seek to interfere with the political arrangements of another as implicitly racialist. The truly liberal view, Sampson affirms, in a manner calculated to cause maximum frenzy among his opponents, is that backward countries are like children, not incurable mental defectives.

Language and Responsibility has come into being in an odd way, but not disablingly odd, given that much of it is about linguistics. It began as a conversation between Mitsou Ronat, speaking French, and Chomsky, speaking English. The tapes, having been transcribed into French throughout, were then lost or thrown away ('were no longer available', as the preface puts it). However, the result reads quite well and is as good an introduction as any to Chomsky's ideas, both scientific and speculative. It has some special merits of its own since Mitsou Ronat is mechanically primed with chic ideology, much of which Chomsky is too intellectually fastidious and, indeed, too honest to put up with in complete silence, particularly if that might be thought to signify assent.

At the outset, discussing the connection or lack of it between his theories about language and his political opinions, he dismisses the notion of some structuralist theory of the hidden sources of ideology with a bold avowal of vulgar Marxism. All that is needed for the analysis of ideology is commonsense and healthy scepticism. The one thing one is not allowed to mention in criticising American foreign policy, he says, is 'the employment of force by the US government . . . to ensure that the countries of the world remain open as far as possible to exploitation by US-based corporations'.

This blunt conception of late capitalist imperialism is part of a general resistance to expertise in 'the analysis of contemporary affairs' or, indeed, 'the social sciences generally'. One such science, put forward for consideration by Ronat as revealing the linguistic oppression of the underdog, is sociolinguistics. Chomsky dismisses its scientific pretensions as he does those of sociology which he likens, for its absence of explanatory principles, to literary criticism. The idealisation of language and its rules carried out in linguistic science is not at all a matter of elitist prescription, it is a simple condition of rationality. In resisting Ronat's ideological inanities the George Orwell in Chomsky happily obscures the rather more frequently evident Ralph Nader side of his personality.

The remaining two-thirds of the book concern themselves more exclusively with linguistic matters. They provide a helpful history of the stages by which Chomsky arrived at his developed theory of language. His recent elusive thought that there might be limits to our powers of theorisation, just as there are to the languages we can learn, is repeated but not much clarified. Chomsky emphasises his methodological commitment to theory. Description of regularities is not enough; the aim of true science is to discover explanatory principles. They are forthcoming in syntax as they are in physics; it was hoped that they would emerge in semantics, but, as in sociology, they never appeared. It is this conception of science that underlies what I have called his vulgar Marxism; the idea that any reasonably clear-headed person can see that the role of the intelligentsia in the West, for example, is to distract attention from the profit-making aims of American corporations.

It is at this point that Chomsky's concerns impinge on structuralism in the European sense of the word. In his conversations with Mitsou Ronat he admits ignorance of continental European linguistic philosophy and for him the primary sense of the word 'structuralism' is the kind of descriptive theory of language put forward by one of his early teachers, Zellig Harris. European structuralism, in other words structuralism as such, is the large and fairly amorphous set of intellectual tendencies which can be traced to some extent to the work of Saussure, but are perhaps best defined in terms of what they are opposed to, the idea central to phenomenology that it is the individual consciousness that confers meaning on the thoughts and things it works with.

There are points of contact between Saussure and Chomsky. The former's distinction of *langue* and *parole* parallels the latter's between competence, the underlying system of capacities, and performance, the empirically accessible output. More generally there is the view that language is an objective, impersonal system which the individual finds already in existence, even if, in Chomsky, it is part of his inherited mental equipment as a member of the species. For both, as for Marx and Freud, theory is a matter of uncovering the hidden principles that explain the behaviour that is too familiar to seem in need of explanation. Both European, Saussurian structuralism and the doctrines of Chomsky have been massively generalised. The European theory has been extended to literary criticism and poetics by Barthes and Deleuze, to myth, ritual and the concerns of anthropology by Lévi-Strauss, to Marxism by Althusser and so on. Chomsky has done his own generalising. For all his protestations there is something in Sampson's idea that his linguistics plays some part, not in suggesting, but at least in providing additional support for, his left-libertarian politics, his neo-guild-socialist conception of the sort of social organisation appropriate for innately creative human beings.

Major works by two leading figures in the European structuralist controversy have been published lately: one by the structuralist Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*; the other by the more or less anti-structuralist and phenomenological Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*. Derrida is not exactly an orthodox structuralist. His dominant theme is the inadequacy of Saussure's distinction between the signifier (the sound) and the signified (the concept). This develops into the notion that philosophical investigators of language have always ignored writing and too much concentrated on speech. The purpose of this historical falsehood appears to be to dramatise what he calls 'the oppressive logic of presence', which is possibly the idea that standardly or basically the sign is uttered in the presence of the thing signified, the latter being conceived as having an inspectably independent existence of its own. I have insufficient confidence in this interpretation of Derrida's message to

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labour the point that meanings are not straightforward objects, but are those features of signs by which they are enabled, among other things, to *refer* to objects.

To the Anglo-Saxon reader, unless he has been specially trained, contemporary French philosophical writing is unmanageable. Such intelligible fragments as occasionally sweep past in the general turbulence of paradox and unsupported affirmation seem generally false or gratuitous. A small example, from the first page of Derrida's text: 'It is certain that the question of the sign is itself more or less, or in any event something other, than a sign of the times. To dream of reducing it to a sign of the times is to dream of violence.' Every sign is more than just a sign, a sound for example. But to be more than something is not to be other than something. I am more than a gin-drinker, but I am not something other than a gin-drinker, even if I am a lot of other things as well. What on earth would it be like to dream of reducing 'the question of the sign' to a sign of the times? Various possibilities come a bit timidly to mind, such as supposing that it is a question recently posed that is about to disappear, being rooted in special circumstances of the age. How does that modest supposition amount to a dream of violence?

Ricoeur is a little more approachable. He is employed part-time at the University of Chicago and so must temper his expository wind to the shorn lams of the Middle West. At the end of his book is a relatively intelligible account of his intellectual development, first given as a lunch-time talk to the Chicago Divinity School. The rest of the book, originally delivered at Toronto, is also reasonably charitable to Anglo-Saxon limitations. It is a large, rather unwieldy survey of a great many lines of thought converging in and around the concept of metaphor, more notable for comprehensive learning than conclusiveness. Even with its comparatively co-operative approach it remains at a considerable distance from the sort of study of language carried on by Chomsky and other linguists and linguistic philosophers of the English-speaking world.

Russell Davies

Proposing

A Newnham Anthology edited by Ann Phillips *Cambridge* £7.50

> Every time the heavy door swung to behind me and I put my hand to the broad, smooth banister I felt that I was breathing in an atmosphere of gentle sense and providence, of practicality and charm. Acute intelligence and femininity combined, I felt, as I had always hoped they did, and made an ambience of peace . . . And the faces of the girls I passed as I creaked up the stairs or echoed down the corridors looked upon me with the same admixture of good humour, intellect and health. This particular expression or deportment lasts through life, I think, for I have rightly guessed that many women whom I have met since then were Newnhamites. They seem so calm and yet alive, at ease and still alert. . . .

I need hardly add that the writer here is a man, a certain N. J. R. Crompton, who went up to St John's College, Cambridge, in 1958. Perhaps it's envy – I was at St John's six years later, and never, as an undergraduate, got beyond the porter's lodge at a girls' college – but it seems to me that Crompton makes Newnham sound like a cross between Julie Andrews's nunnery and a geisha-house. 'Stimulating yet domestic' he calls it, in his blessed yet patronising way. By this, you can bet he means that those fascinating girls, every one a potential prof, had not forgotten the art of making a chap jolly comfortable. Despite an atmosphere that crackled with feminine wit and, you know, *intuition,* one knew that in a crisis, one could count on one's collar getting ironed with a willing and practised hand. Crompton's, at a guess, would be a dog-collar.

Newnham was founded in 1871 and its purpose is no longer as clear as it once was. To begin with, there was the challenge in getting women recognised as worth educating; and then in having the college body accepted into the University system, degrees and all, alongside the men. This was more than a lifetime's effort in itself: only in 1948 were women finally permitted to turn up and accept their degrees in person. For the first half of the century, then, Newnham was satisfactorily building up its own strength, and turning out a regular supply of career intellectuals – but also a large number of accomplished housewives. The average Newnhamite of those decades became the thinking man's helpmeet. All over the Empire there were Cromptons thanking God that their wives actually understood what the men were talking about. But nowadays, women require more than a mere passport to a man's world: they need a work permit. They go to University, by and large, not for accomplishment but for expertise; and this may perhaps explain why Newnham recently decided not to follow its old rival Girton in admitting men. Now is the very time in history when a working girl doesn't want her armchair filled by a purring Cromptonian.

It follows that this book of memoirs, letters, diary fragments and little lampoons is a bit of a downhill run. Its first half, up to 1920, is full of the exhilaration of beginnings, and the quaintness of Victorian conventions chucklingly remembered by the old. (When a girl, in those days, wanted to progress to Christian-name terms with a fellow-undergraduate, she had to 'propose to her', which is rather alarming the first time you meet it in the text.) What is particularly refreshing is that the men involved in the early history of the college are, necessarily, heroic progressives and egalitarians. When the first Grace for admitting women to Cambridge exams (without degrees) was passed in the 1881 Senate by 366 votes to 32, young Dr Jebb, later Sir Richard Claverhouse Jebb and Regius Professor of Greek, penned an epigram which captures the atmosphere of the times delightfully. *In 1881, it was honourable to be a Crompton:*

> The votes by which the ladies won
> Were as a Leap Year's days:
> A month's brief tale would all but tell
> The number of the Nays.
>
> Thus, as the sun in heaven, our cause
> Is dear to men of sense:
> The adverse tide is little more
> Than lunar influence.

That the foibles of the Founders themselves should be relentlessly endearing might seem a matter of distance and enchantment and looking at life through the wrong end of a rose-coloured telescope; but I must refer sceptical readers to a wonderful photograph, one of the two or three best things in the book, where four Principals of Newnham are seen together in the gardens. Seldom are four such remarkable 'speaking' countenances captured within one frame. Miss Strachey and Miss Stephen, standing, bear the distinguishing marks of famous families, the former (sister of Lytton) being tall and meritocratic and sexless while the latter has a skull and jaw of monumentally imposing heaviness. Miss Clough, niece of the arch-Founder, has the unmistakably mischievous face of a 'character' who liked other characters; while at the other end of the bench, old Mrs Sidgwick is plainly still a girl beneath the papery skin. Pictured in tranquillity and recollected similarly, these figures still emerge with an eccentric liveliness.

Certain constants of college life persisted. The food was evidently ghastly and may still be for all I know. The heating of rooms was

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another problem. College debate over techniques with firelighters and sticks lasted about half a century. The river, too, seems to have played a surprisingly large part in Newnham life – far larger than it ever did for those of us who actually lived in the mist that rose over the Cam. But for some at Newnham, such things were only extra annoyances and irrelevances to add to the central pain of the fact that they didn't fit in. A couple of pieces of this kind – and it's absolutely right that they should be there – cast a real cloud over the book's account of the modern era. A long outpouring by J. McNaughton, who came up in 1954, approaches its end with the following: 'I now wash nappies and eat chips in a council house, and I don't want it any different. I keep very quiet about that BA, and those few friends that do know of it are kind enough to overlook it.' The resentment, one suspects, was there before she began, and nags on at the same level. It's a matter of family, and expectations: Cambridge is still best suited to assist the gliding progress of a Strachey.

We could have done with something bang up to date to finish with. As it is, the book ended for me on a note of personal sadness, in a delirious garden-party piece from my own time by Valerie Grosvenor Myer. 'Flan (Felicity Anne) Snee was there,' she writes, 'having taken her final exam to make her a doctor the day before, or perhaps that day . . .' Flan later went doctoring in Africa, I heard, and died of a filthy virus almost at once. No matter how much one enjoys one's three years, they sooner or later turn into years of regret.

Nicholas Shrimpton

Survivors

Sleepless Nights by ELIZABETH HARDWICK *Weidenfeld* £5.50
Chamber Music by DORIS GRUMBACH *Hamish Hamilton* £5.50
Soldiers of '44 by WILLIAM MCGIVERN *Collins* £5.95
Troika by DAVID GURR *Macdonald & Jane's* £4.95

Admirers of Robert Lowell will probably be turning to *Sleepless Nights,* by the poet's widow Elizabeth Hardwick, in search of intimate biographical details. The novel is written in the form of a memoir and does contain, in its penultimate chapter, a few glimpses of life in Boston with a distinguished American author. But to read it only as a commentary on another writer's poems would be a mistake. This is a far more original, even a more impersonal, book than at first seems possible.

The brief opening sections are confessional. An upbringing in rural Kentucky and a literary life in Boston and New York are delicately suggested. Thereafter the gaze is directed outwards. We are offered a sequence of character sketches which build slowly into a sustained meditation. The first specimen is a famous one – Billie Holiday, seen in the New York of the 1940s. Her pagan splendour and 'luminous self-destruction' are followed by a contrasting account of Miss Cramer, a genteel derelict somehow surviving in the modern city. Recollection and contemporary report are constantly thus juxtaposed. A description of Alex, the confirmed bachelor, precedes a case history of two members of the American left in the 1930s; memories of the narrator's mother give way to an almost anthropological picture of adultery in post-war Holland. The thread which connects these diverse experiences is a fascination with the choices, conscious or unconscious, which shape lives. Self-destroyers like Billie Holliday are set against indomitable survivors like Miss Cramer, solitaries like Alex are tacitly contrasted with devoted couples and compulsive philanderers.

Though the argument proceeds essentially by example, the book is invigorated by Elizabeth Hardwick's willingness to comment on the lives which she so lovingly delineates. 'Marie', she says of her rich 1930s socialist 'I do not understand your fear of disillusion. Don't you see that revision can enter the heart like a new love?' There is also a marvellous New York cocktail party with the academics coughing out their titles and universities 'like old barons of the Empire'. The philosophising is sometimes a little pedestrian. But at its best this book is a marvellous combination of epigram and poetic evocation.

The north-eastern United States also provide the setting for Doris Grumbach's *Chamber Music*. Caroline Newby meets the promising composer Robert MacLaren at a piano-teacher's party in 1893. Three months later he marries her. She is surprised, but not half so surprised as the reader, since we know that Robert is simultaneously having an incestuous affair with his mother, a homosexual affair with a fellow music student and suffering from primary-stage syphilis. The rest of the book chronicles his physical decay in grisly, pre-penicillin detail. When the horrid old man finally dies, she finds belated fulfilment in a lesbian affair with his nurse. The novel's chief concern is with the repression, and eventual restoration, of a woman's sensibility. Accordingly it suffers from its insensitive descriptive manner. When she comes in from the rain, our heroine's hat smells 'dank, like crows submerged in a cistern'. Unless American plumbing is very different from our own, that seems to be a classic example of the simile which makes things more obscure than they were to start with.

Quite another side of American life comes to the fore in William McGivern's *Soldiers of '44*. As the title suggests, we are here concerned not with delicate intimations among the birch woods of New England but with violent conflicts among the pine trees of the Ardennes. A section of mobile anti-aircraft gunners, commanded by Sergeant Buell Docker, shoots down the new German secret weapon, the ME262 jet fighter. A Tiger tank is promptly dispatched to eliminate them before they can report their success.

Up to this point the novel is merely a pale reflection of *The Young Lions* and McGivern's account of combat lacks the conviction which Irwin Shaw managed 30 years ago. The real interest of the book arises when the action shifts from the battlefield to the courtroom. Docker's section had picked up on the road a solitary private, the son of an American general, whose technical knowledge of the weak spots of the Panzerkampfwagen VIB wins the day for them. At a subsequent enquiry the military authorities wish to conceal his desertion from a previous unit and record only his heroism. The consequent debate about what should go on at an official enquiry is very readable and has obvious implications for more recent American military history.

Victory, in *Soldiers of '44,* hangs upon a mathematical calculation of whether or not a cannon shell will pierce the 40mm belly armour of a Tiger Mark II. A similarly expert sense of the mechanical nature of modern war informs David Gurr's thriller *Troika.* As his heroes escape from Riga in a commandeered Russian destroyer they have a fatalistic sense of the extent to which they are at the mercy of electronics. In this scene the book briefly approaches the potency of Len Deighton's study of modern naval strategy, *Spy Story.* Elsewhere there is less to be said for it.

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Denys Hay

The Permanent Revolution

The Printing Press as an Agent of Change by ELIZABETH L. EISENSTEIN *Cambridge* 2 vols £35

Professor Eisenstein's book is unashamedly and deliberately about élites, those handfuls of pace-makers whom one hardly dared to mention in tutorials a few years ago without provoking complaints at the irrelevance of such people. We were all being deafened by the Long March of Everyman, though the tramping feet are by now a long way off. Professor Eisenstein is quite clear, and surely right, that even in our own day only a minority read books, save an occasional thriller to ward off the boredom of a train journey.

Why concentrate on the printing of learned works, many in Latin and comprehensible only to well-educated men and women? Because Mrs Eisenstein agrees with Francis Bacon that the discovery of gunpowder, the magnet, printing and silk (the latter is habitually forgotten) ushered in a new world. I for one would agree with her, and single out printing as the novelty which had the sharpest and most immediate impact. It took centuries before gunpowder did more than encourage the rich to build more comfortable houses, and probably longer for the compass basically to affect navigation. Printing, on the other hand, spread from Mainz where it emerged about 1450, and spread like wildfire until every sizeable town – at any rate in Western Europe – had its team or teams of compositors-printers-scholars.

It is also the case, as Mrs Eisenstein is at pains to stress, that 'general' historians take all this for granted; they may insist on the study of palaeography for their graduates but they ignore technical bibliography and the 'revolution' in communications, retrieval systems and so on which printing made possible, indeed inevitable. A 'revolution' it certainly was and, if the author rather overdoes the word, she may be forgiven her vehemence.

If historians at large neglect the processes of printing and publishing made possible by the good fortune that the West had developed a tiny alphabet, they might complain that this book goes a little too far the other way, in turn neglecting the contents of the books. I guess Mrs Eisenstein would reply that she had no alternative if she was to survey the influence of the press between the mid-15th and late-18th centuries, although she bases most of her work on France and England. If historians have been negligent, there is still a voluminous literature on which Mrs Eisenstein largely relies for her information.

It would be too much to expect that so extensive a treatment of so extensive a subject would all be equally persuasive. I liked the section the author calls 'a classical revival reoriented' in its opening 'introduction'. Here she discusses judiciously the concept of the Renaissance and its relations to books. But I was jerked out of sympathy by a reference to the 'so-called permanent Renaissance'. Where does this phrase come from? Surely no-one sensible. Printing certainly more or less coincided with the New Learning, but it did not in any way conduce to its permanence, as the death of the classics in schools and universities in recent generations makes very evident. And indeed, even the techniques of printing were to change. As Mrs Eisenstein notes, this was happening rapidly in the decades round 1800.

The learned could pass on their ideas more quickly by print and, despite hostile censorship, such ideas were unlikely to be obliterated as had (if only rarely) happened in the world of manuscripts. And even those who began illiterate or quasi-illiterate could more readily than before improve themselves, even become great scholars. In a different field, governments were quick to use the new device for administrative purposes, printing papal bulls, blank indulgences, proclamations, all for quite practical purposes. But books carry the weight of ideas and the joys of artistic prose and poetry; it is books which are gathered in great libraries and listed in catalogues. Sometimes in reading this study, suggestive and in general well-written though it is, one feels that content of writings is sacrificed too much to numbers. Do Scottish ministers ever open Calvin, or look even at Knox? How many astronomers have read a line of Galileo; do zoologists ever open a book by Darwin?

It is to the sciences, the physical sciences that Mrs Eisenstein turns in her final chapters, in effect the last volume. On these sections I am quite unqualified to pass an opinion: the author's sophisticated analysis is beyond my competence. She must, I am sure, be right in what she says about these matters, though when I read her chapter on 'the scriptural tradition recast', there were moments when I was somewhat shaken. Were there many Lollard martyrs in England? Did printing lead to the crystallisation of protestantism and Roman catholicism? (This is based on a quotation from Gene Rice, who does not himself say that printing did the trick.) Is it meaningful, and if so what *does* it mean, to say that the questions provoked by the New Testament 'had changed along with the format of the Gospel itself'? And it seems patently absurd to instance the Rheims-Douai Bible as an example of vernacular scriptures printed abroad to avoid persecution. In this section Mrs Eisenstein makes statements which by their very nature can only be guesses. Nor is she quite fair to that odd abbot of Sponheim, Trithemius. His main criticism of printed books – as opposed to those produced in a monastic scriptorium – was that as one copied one absorbed the message, whereas when one skimmed a printed page one need not. It seems to me a perverse attitude, but there is surely no doubt that travellers who, prior to photography, made their own sketches, did look hard and long at what they admired, whereas a snapshot saves time, trouble and perhaps understanding.

On the other hand, in this section on 'the scriptural tradition' the author rightly censures the historians' inveterate habit of cutting up the past into tidy if unreal divisions (here her reference is to Jack Hexter), and she concludes, fairly enough, 'Once again we are back waiting for Luther to arrive at the church door'. She has a good discussion on the effects which the press had in diminishing the status of the clerical copyist while elevating the dignity of the printed book trade, producing as it now did saints' lives, liturgical works, and the Scriptures (the last two have certainly kept some privileged English publishers afloat in lean years).

Finally the book turns, and in considerable detail, to physical science, and in particular to literature connected with astronomy. Here, among other points, Mrs Eisenstein rightly stresses how precarious are the generalisations of scientists, how ephemeral are the prohibitions of censors. The most serious fault of the work is, I believe, its neglect of the results of printing for literature. Something pretty detailed should surely have been said of the effects on the author of addressing an unknown audience. Something should have been said to fit into the evolving world of the press the really great writers – men like Ariosto, Tasso, Milton, rather than scamps like Aretino, and the great historians of the 17th century deserve analysis. What did typography have to do with both the 'smooth' and the learned styles? Anyway, Mrs Eisenstein has taken me back to Bacon's *Novum organum*. I am sure others will be grateful to her for pointing their noses and spectacles towards the great books of the past.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Mark Kidel

Save the Wail

The Muzak Corporation manufactures factory-music programmed to counterbalance the peaks and troughs of a worker's day, subliminal uppers and downers served to the labour-force under the guise of a better working environment. The feel is leisurely after the morning tea or coffee break, a musical valium to counteract the caffeine high, but the pace and rhythm pick up in the mid-afternoon to cope with post-prandial drowsiness. Disco, the muzak of the contemporary dance-floor, is designed to keep us bouncing all the way to the grave, with a boom-boom beat that is guaranteed to keep our hearts from floundering even in the deepest depression. There are no ups and downs in disco – just a continuous flow of canned (and not very meaty) bounce, with little or no change of mood: the best disco disc-jockey is one who can weave together hours of music without ever appearing to change records.

Disco has become inescapable – as a soundtrack of our times, a predictable meter for a world which cannot do without prediction and control, as well as a style without which it is now difficult for many musicians to survive as commercial propositions. From Ian Dury (on his latest album 'Do It Yourself') to the Sex Pistols ('Death Disco', their latest single, may be an attack on the genre, but the tag will no doubt help increase sales), disco has become the most familiar sound around.

With origins in the black music of the early Seventies and the dancing habits of the white middle-classes, disco is lowest common denominator music par excellence, sophisticated enough to make those blacks who create or dance to it feel that they have reached the same stage of cultural evolution as their former white masters, and just raunchy enough to make the white bourgeoisie go on a fantasy slumming trip, a safe taste of those jungle rhythms we so love to hate. The 'progress' of black music reflects the social aspirations of the ghetto; the history of blues, jazz, R & B and soul is the record of a climb up the ladder of ever whiter respectability, each step a positive move away from best-forgotten origins in the bush. There was a time when every good soul singer – except perhaps James Brown – wanted to play Las Vegas, but disco has changed all that, and there is no need to aspire to MOR (middle-of-the-road) success because the guts have dropped out of black music and there is nothing to feel ashamed of any more. Disco is the ultimate 'cross-over' – the business's term for an amalgamation of styles, usually for a sales-boosting reason; black men need not wear white masks to turn out disco for, however hard they scream and shout, it is a form of music that has lost touch with its roots.

The best of black music, whether Robert Johnson's delta blues, Muddy Waters's R & B or Wilson Pickett's 'In the Midnight Hour', derived its power – an uncompromising strength loaded with sexuality – from a deeply heartfelt sense of the right moment just before or after the strict metronome beat, a rhythmic version of what flamenco players call *duende*. Jazzmen call it 'swing', while the less sophisticated have always taken it for granted, a natural quality of music that lived and something which could certainly not be subjected to the withering process of definition. The sexuality of jazz and blues was almost always implicit in the double-entendre and symbolism of the lyrics and the languorous or at other times frenetic excitement of the music, but in more recent years sex has grown into a commodity retailed in the mass market and deprived of its mystery. Disco reflects the commercialisation of sex, its reduction to a series of dance steps containing as much power as a sequence of semaphor signals.

The dance, since man's early days, has provided a means of transcending the ordinary physical world around us, a magical means of coming into contact with the energies that drive the universe. Disco is about as far away as you could get from the original sacred dance, for all its masquerade of sexual gyrations and intricately worked-out dance-steps.

Disco, like a Butlin's holiday camp, is about programmed happiness , for it leaves no room for ambiguity: it is designed to obliterate any memory of pain, boredom, or despair, to anaesthetise the inhabitants of our brave new world into bouncing oblivion. Whatever the surface differences, as much a ploy to sell the product as a reflection of true creativity, all of disco shares one unrelenting mood: canned excitement and joy, processed Saturday night fever to help those long leisure hours fly by. Like TV, disco provides a low-participation form of escape: it demands very little of the listener or dancer, while being powerful enough to hypnotise them. But the passive escape afforded by the lure of disco is only a mirror-image of the style of labour that so many of us face during working hours, the production-line of factory and office. Disco's power comes from its solid, regular and incessant beat, appealing because it lifts us up, but as sinister in its implications as muzak with its manipulation of the cycles and moods on the shop-floor.

Disco is a product of the machine age and the availability of technology has enabled it to develop into a genre of almost unequalled sophistication. On the rhythmic level it is too much like clockwork to be interesting, but its textures, served by the versatility of the modern recording studio and the genuine artistry of a few of those who produce the 'sound', are both intricate and varied. The logical summit of the disco trend comes with the Belgian group Telex. On their first album 'Looking for Saint-Tropez' (Sirc SRK 6072) they have served up a steel-cold and almost totally electronic concoction of sounds, the sort of noise a large computer might churn out at the end of a long day, refreshed with a dose of cocaine. There is nothing particularly Belgian about the record except for the distorted French lyrics and, more significantly perhaps, its almost complete blandness. With Telex, disco, the deadly dance of the global village, meets the aridity of the synthesiser and studio mixing desk, and the result, for all its virtuosity and cleverness, is frighteningly cold and even more frighteningly fashionable.

With Telex, we see how disco is the music for the sons and daughters of the technocracy. We like to think that exploitation, manipulation and control are entirely the product of power exercised by individuals, institutions and social groups, but in the case of robotic disco it is clear that the mechanism of enslavement is much more subtle and that control is as much a function of those who abandon themselves to it as of the 'nasty' big record companies that capitalise on the public's insatiable demand for a musical drug. We get the hits we deserve, and if there is an awful lot of disco around these days it is because we rather like the heartless security it provides. We like being sheep, as Adrian Munsey has suggested in his record spoof single 'C'est Sheep' – a cacophony of bleating mammals super-imposed over a regulation disco background with a thumping beat and a whole orchestra of electronic sounds, produced to glittering quality by the Mael Brothers, formerly leaders of Sparks and now masters of the disco production line. Munsey, who happens to be the Head of Film and Photography at a London polytechnic, has no doubt found the ideal formula for raising film finance, a no less compromising solution than the normal institutional channels, and the success of his gimmick only seems to underline the present universal obsession with the genre.

Fortunately enough, the rock industry could never survive on a single fashion: in the age of pluralism there need to be fads and styles for each generation of consumers, and disco is by no means the only sound around at the moment. Punk and the new wave were symptomatic of a rebellion against the pretensions of 'progressive' rock and the insipid commercialism of disco. The most accessible part of this rebellion is to be found in what has come to be known as 'power pop' – the music media thrive on labels and the nature of the business depends on a continuous stream of new categories, sub-categories and revivals. Two relatively recent releases give an excellent idea of what power pop is all about: Dave Edmunds's 'Repeat When Necessary' (Swan Song Records SSK 59409) and Lew Lewis Reformer's 'Save the Wail' (Stiff Seez 16). Lewis, who surfaced from the depths of Southend as the original harmonica player with Eddie and the Hot Rods, plays an updated version of the rough-and-ready British R & B of the mid-Sixties – the frenzied sort of stuff that the Stones, Yardbirds and others had us all panting to at the Marquee. It is simple, tough and, above all, energetic. Dr Feelgood – another Thames estuary band – were the first to rediscover the almost naive excitement of the guitar, bass, drums, vocals and harmonica line-up. The new wave owed a lot to the extraordinarily high energy that the Feelgoods generated on stage, but they developed in a direction that pushed unbridled power and speed at the expense of accessibility, musicality and the music's roots in blues and pop. The new wave and the vast school of very serious new bands that it has

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spawned have rejected sophistication, but the music they have produced has turned out as difficult to digest as anything by Yes or the Pink Floyd.

Dave Edmunds has the same joyous but never rigidly reverential approach to his source of inspiration – in this case, pure first-generation rock'n'roll. On 'Repeat When Necessary', he romps through a number of classics and originals with a near-perfect mixture of force and simplicity: irresistible dance music, but glowing with a quality that is absent from most of disco, a freshness that cuts through the surface glitter and technical appeal of today's mass-produced music for robots.

Theatre

John Arden

Unofficial Voices

'An Youse Lot by GERARD MCLAUGHLIN and ANDREW SLIMON *Half-Moon*
Pula Arts Commune *Half-Moon*
Puppet Play *Theatre Technis*
Pulse by ALEM MEZGEBE *Africa Centre*
A Question of Habit by JACKIE HOLBOROUGH; and **Under Eros** by JENNY HICKS and ROS DAVIS *Jackson's Lane Centre*
Night Child by SHANKARA ANGADI *Young Vic*

If the purpose of playing is not only 'to hold the mirror up to nature' (as the man said), but also (as the man said, though it's not so commonly quoted), 'to show the very age and body of the time his form and pressure', there has to be some significant relationship between what is on the stage and who watches it, and where. 'Hamlet's Advice' was proffered to a troupe who were about to show murder to a murdering king, with what results we know. Had *Gonzago* been performed before an audience of Elsinore social-workers, Marxist school-teachers, and Japanese tourists, upon the strength of an Arts Council grant administered by Sir Roy Polonius, augmented by the sponsorship of Yaughan and Co, lager-brewers to the court, it is unlikely they would have made much active sense of it, and the dynasty would not have come so quickly to its end. On the other hand, when word of the production eventually reached the ears of His Majesty (his conscience thus caught with so much less effective impact), would not the grants have been cut, or the VAT increased, to such an extent that the players must have gone back to Wittenberg in double-quick time, or been thrown on the mercy of the Dansker dole-queue?

All of which is only to say that after abstention from England and its theatre-seats for most of 10 years, I now find the nation undergoing terrible punishment (see the first half of this journal, passim), and as guest-reviewer for two weeks I am naturally anxious to discover how much of the punishment is reflected in the new plays presented, and who is the 'age and body of the time' that will profit from the reflection. I have spent this last decade in a country where a dogged resistance to the lethal flailing of the tortured limbs of Britain has been a marked characteristic of at least a portion of the population: which has made for a certain social and political optimism, not always appreciated over here, and a parallel vigour in some (unofficial) branches of the arts. To begin with, I sought out particularly unofficial aspects of the British theatre to see if they matched my recent Irish experiences.

Up to a point: yes they did. But the point is so small in relation to the whole of the theatre-going public, that I am frankly at a loss what to conclude from it. Mind you, I saw, and was part of, the whole of the theatre-*working* population so strongly represented on that great march to Covent Garden Grand Ol' Opry (overflowing), and thence to the surly Parliament, to rage against the VAT: but did such an encouraging sense of unity in adversity wipe out or merely highlight the hypocrisy of the theatre unions' disgraceful betrayal, earlier in the year, of the NT strike? I cannot answer, just yet: but that strike struck me as the last lost hope of a publicly-funded socially-committed professional theatre with any sort of pretension to anything like dynamism. To take the sour taste of South Bank pusillanimity out of my mouth I went to the following productions, and most of them were not subsidised:

1: *'An Youse Lot* by 'Celtic Delilight', two actor-authors from Bradford with a wicked attack on England's superior attitude to the Irish and Scots in our midst. A spitting, if you like, in our guilt-contorted face. Acrid, acute, comprehensive: at times over-elaborate, though the ideas are necessarily complex. Often very funny.

2: The Pula Arts Commune: semi-dramatised black poetry accompanied by traditional drumming, from Soweto. If this group were Irish they'd be in trouble with the PTA. The poems are militant in the fullest sense of the word. The poems are also in English. Similarly Celtic Delilight do not write in Gaelic, though they are concerned all the time with a Gaelic view of our society. This 'second-language syndrome' is a crucial element of anti-colonial resistance culture, and it takes generations for it to be properly resolved. In its earlier stages (as with Africans) it can hamper the strongest forms of dramatic writing.

The above two shows were part of a teach-in at the Half-Moon: and the audience was largely Irish. That the English were so few is in itself significant.

3: An evening at Theatre Technis in Camden Town. A lively little ghost play improvised by and for local children: and a discussion on the state of Cyprus. No full production running there at present, but when it does it will probably be in Greek. This theatre fulfils the function of a complete social/cultural centre for the Cypriot community. Turks as well as Greeks took part in the discussion – about the only place in the *world,* I am told, where these partitioned islanders can meet without prejudice. George Evangeliou, the director, believes that Cypriot theatre in Britain should be seen as part of British culture, and not merely an 'ethnic' phenomenon – condescending term. But the almost complete lack of true multi-racial casting on our stages does not persuade me he has much to hope for just yet. His audience are of course nearly all Cypriot.

4: *Pulse* was a morality play about a black dictator (Amin? Bokassa?) which was very much in the style of our European 16th-century works, virtue and vices warring for the soul of an individual leader. In English: and interestingly concerned with a dictator's need to corrupt language. It lacked precise reference to the imperialist origins of such tyrants. I wondered why. But no more of that, lest Bishop Muzorewa write in to accuse me of slightly crazy intemperate polemic. Yulisa Amadu Maddy, who directs and plays the lead, is an actor of considerable power. A multi-racial casting practice should at least find him Cloten or Oswald, maybe Leontes, at the RSC. But would he accept or reject such a prospect? His audience were about half African, half serious British.

5: 'Clean Break' at the Jackson's Lane Centre are a group of women ex-prisoners. The authors of the two plays also act in them. Company formed in prison and plays first presented there. The first piece was a grim short story about urban guerrillas, the second a random conversation about life and politics. Genuine 'primitives' in the Douanier Rousseau manner, outrageously melodramatic lines delivered with the calm matter-of-factness of ladies discussing preparations for a church tea, yet the basic ideas were not unsophisticated, and showed considerable defiance.

And the result was hilarious: the cast seemed to expect that it should be, yet were clearly not sending themselves up. Something to do with the ready acceptance of all manner of 'deviant' behaviour within a gaol? I'd never seen anything like it and I'd love to see them again. But their next work will have been made outside prison, and presumably must have a quite different tone. Their audience unclassifiable: but I suspected a lot of social-workers, and conscious feminists.

6: *Night Child* is a school play about, and acted by, some delightful schoolgirls, written by a teacher. Like all the best school productions it was highly spectacular, very carefully conceived, with no sloppiness. It deals with the 'poetic' child who feels a misfit and dies. Apart from the *Technicolor Dreamcoat* tinge of the music it had a curiously 19th-century feel and made me want to be 14 again. Audience: parents, teachers, other school-children.

Conclusions: the Gael, the African, the Cypriot, the (female) convict, the child, all of them to an extent subordinate, unassimilated, alien elements in our society. There is some opportunity for them to achieve their own theatrical voice and to utter it in their own enclosures to their own audiences. But these elements, taken as a whole, bulk surprisingly large in London. How far does the 'official' theatre speak, not *about* them (for indeed it often does), but *for* them as if they were as much part of the real British public as – as you are? Who are you? The gentle reader? The gentle theatre-goer of our officially-sponsored culture? I'll try and find out what *your* voice is, next week.

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Television

Julian Barnes

No Fear

There might be a case for David Jacobs' new show *Where are They Now?* (BBC-1) being retitled *Who the Hell Were They in the First Place?,* but there's no denying the visceral appeal of its formula. Andy Warhol once made the famous suggestion that everyone should be allowed to be famous for a day; this programme, by following up those who enjoyed an ephemeral fame some twenty years ago, gives us a glum hint of what it might be like for us afterwards if Warhol's law applied. It's a bombproof idea for a TV show, even if none of Jacobs' choices ever coincides with your or my requests. We all have our private pantheon of half-forgotten heroes. I know who I want to hear about: Sabrina, and Yana, and several Australian cricketing all-rounders of the early Fifties, and Dale Robertson the left-handed *Wells Fargo* star, and that actress who every Saturday night played Perry Mason's secretary Della Street. We all ache mildly for such departed spirits, grumbling like Betjeman's old poet in the Café Royal:

> Where is Oscar? Where is Bosie?
> Have I seen that man before?
> And the old one in the corner,
> Is it really Wratislaw?

Mostly, of course, we never track down Wratislaw, though we do sometimes get lucky: last year I remember spotting Della Street again on American TV. She was doing an ad for microwave ovens.

The first episode of *WATN* brought us up to date on The Milky Bar Kid (formerly 9-year-old Terry Brooks, subsequently bit-part actor, Butlins redcoat and lorry-driver), Ruby Murray (five waxings in the Hit Parade at the same time, a feat never achieved by the Beatles), and Captain Kurt Carlsen, skipper of the 'Flying Enterprise', a perfectly ordinary ship which sank in 1951 with absolutely no loss of life, but whose last 14 rudderless and keeled-over days happened to have been a big story on BBC News. Miss Murray turned out to be pleasant, nervous and rather boring; Captain Carlsen to be stolid, sleepy and incredibly boring. This may, of course, be ascribable to the interviewer, for Jacobs' unsophisticated technique does involve some unsettling shifts of tone and subject. He also seems mainly interested in finding out about 1) Money; 2) Pain Suffered; and 3) What it feels like to be Obscure (unlike, say, just to take an example at random, David Jacobs himself, who, well, now you come to mention it, was unbelievably famous all those years ago with *Juke Box Jury,* and still continues to be unbelievably famous).

Miss Murray was asked about the break-up of her marriage: 'It was a painful time?' She naturally answered, 'Yes', to which Jacobs' sensitive and tender supplementary was, 'What sort of pain did you notice?' A bit later, Captain Carlsen sat patiently through questions like 'Whilst' (does anyone else in the world say 'Whilst'?) 'you were alone, you must have known fear?'; to which he stolidly replied that he hadn't. Fortunately for him, he didn't at this point have to listen to Jacobs' voice-over, telling us that 'the Atlantic has no sense of humour'. (Now the Pacific, mind you, is a bundle of laughs, while the Baltic had me chewing the carpet only the other week with a whole string of Polish jokes; and I know quite a cheeky local pond too, a sort of aqueous Charlie Drake.) But the most telling put-down came when Jacobs had finished describing the hero's welcome that Carlsen received. 'After the publicity settled down, what happened then?' Carlsen, dourly: 'Nothing.'

'Cold'; 'ferocious'; 'a very sombre person'; 'the biggest tightwad ever'. The characterisations of Groucho Marx in Barry Norman's *The Hollywood Greats* (BBC-1) weren't exactly amiable; some of them seemed more than a bit ungracious, coming as they did from those – like 'personal assistant' Erin Fleming – who had benefited from his death. Even his one surviving brother Zeppo described him largely in negatives: 'He wasn't what we call a Beau Brummel'; and later, 'I never considered Groucho a great lover'. Not that Groucho rated himself in that department: asked once if he'd change anything if he had his life over again, he said No; pressed, he conceded, 'Well, I'd try more positions.'

Barry's bio was well laced with Marxian detail – Harpo played his harp 'back to front' in a style no professional plucker could ever understand; Margaret Dumont never got any of the jokes which splattered all around her – but nonetheless established a sombre overall tone. It wasn't just the thought of the old comic genius lying unconscious and being squabbled over for the last two years of his life; it was the sense that he hadn't enjoyed too much of what led up to that unenviable finale either. He wasn't manic depressive, as the best comedians are meant to be; but he certainly came across as sour, mean, domineering and joyless. His first two wives took to drink; his personal assistant and his son recalled him with scant affection. Zeppo, who looked around 55 and still had a nifty line in wisecracks, said of his brother's third wife: 'She was good for Groucho, because he'd insult her and she wouldn't understand it.' You couldn't help wishing there had been more people around in his life who had been salutarily bad for him.

The Editors (BBC-1) had one of those invariably diverting squabbles about whether or not the popular tabloids have gone roaring down-market since the advent of the *Sun* (whose current TV advertising line, by the way, is the super-subtle 'Are you getting it every day?'). Peter Preston of the *Guardian* and Phillip Whitehead appeared for the goodies, but kept on being hampered by having to start sentences with 'I don't want to sound pious . . .' or 'I don't want to seem pompous . . .' Opposing them, a trio of tit-and-bum baddies, including Derek 'Look No Nipples' Jameson, robustly played the in-touch-with-popular-taste, look-what-happened-to-the-*Herald* line. It all ended enjoyably up a cul de sac. Whitehead didn't really have enough statistics (for instance, on column-lengths of news now as against ten years ago) to press home a killing attack; Preston looked a little coy, possibly because of all those photos of knickers and negligees he prints. The nicest line to be extracted from the affray came when Whitehead accused the baddies of churning out pre-packaged opinions and clichés. Bernard Shrimsley of the *News of the Screws* protested vehemently. 'We avoid clichés,' he declared, 'like the plague.'

Sport

Russell Davies

Boot People

So here it is again, the Football League programme, before the shine has even begun to wear off Henry Blofeld. O prescient Byron, who wrote

> The English winter – ending in July
> To recommence in August

when the F.A. Charity Shield was still a lump of ore. Well, for the benefit of Chinese readers anxious to deepen their knowledge of the English game (and having lost to Chelsea's Gang of Eleven, the People's Republic must be returning to the drawing board with their morale somewhat acupunctured), I append an essential *guide folklorique* to the coming season in Division One. Depressed English readers may care to console themselves with the possibility that our new Vietnamese neighbours will turn out to be fantastically talented Boot People.

Arsenal: One of the few League clubs that uses no floodlight pylons for illumination, relying instead on the lightbulbs which incandesce above the head of any player who has a good idea. Star performer: Liam 'Lighthouse' Brady. Supporters' theme song: 'Come out, come out, wherever you are.'

Aston Villa: Named after the council house in whose capacious airing-cupboard the legendary ball-less training sessions still are held: Manager: Mr Saunders. Style of play: Saunders stlyle. Favourite ice-cream: vanilla.

Bolton Wanderers: Having won, this very week, the Royal Humane Society's Annual Bronze Medal for Pulling Little Boys out of Morecambe Bay (prizewinner: A. Gowling), the club has already satisfied its lust for trophies and can be expected to wander peacefully down the table, as ever. The Trevor Dainty Self-Styling Hair Award for 1979 is shared between F. Worthington and Roscoe Tanner.

Brighton & Hove Albion: Go-ahead manager Iron Mongery has ideas which may well keep this newly-promoted side's feet above water until well into September. All-nude strip guarantees healthy crowds at away fixtures.

Bristol City: 'By no means a treasure chest of talent', the *Sun* newspaper has written, 'this club has kept abreast of the times and defied the knockers. Manager Alan Dicks (*sic*, 42-34-44) says they are a delight to play with. Keep it up Alan! We just love to see that centre forward!'

Coventry City: Theme song: 'Run, Rabbi, Run.' Despite all that the sceptics perennially say, the Sky Blues have a real chance of gaining Major Honours this season. I have it on excellent authority that the Major recently applied to run the Supporters' Club bar.

Crystal Palace: Flash manager Terry Valuables approaches the season with confidence, but much depends on the form of his new signing, former England captain Ian Jury-Prone. One thing is certain: the crowds will be flocking back to Palace's quaint little pink-washed ground in rural Sussex.

Derby County: With the departure of Caledonian nightmare Tommy 'Hair Of The

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Docherty, Derby have a whole new era of mediocrity to look forward to. However, there is no reason why they should not make slow progress on their beautiful pitch, the envy of the moto-cross world.

Everton: A refined side, much too good for this earth. Would prefer to play on cork or parquet, better still on Axminster. Amiable manager Stroppy Lee takes the knocks, however, with a rabid grin, and has a firm grasp of most referees' throats.

Ipswich: Formerly a skill-and-speed club with the best-greased knees in the League, Ipswich are now breeding giant defenders with well-greased elbows. Should do well.

Leeds Utd: Known as 'The Perfect Gentlemen', Leeds recently sacked Tony Currie unceremoniously when he was seen tickling a defender unfairly with a wren's feather as they went up for a high ball. Like so much that happens at Leeds, both the action and its consequences were in exquisite taste.

Liverpool: Housed in steel traps and fed exclusively on red food, Liverpool's shaven-headed squad thrives on sex-starvation and torture. Players who falter or fail are either fed to Wolves (see below) or press-ganged by marauders from the Welsh naval base at Swansea.

Manchester City: City has become a buy-word in football. Nicknamed 'The Who', this is a team that has come from nowhere and still does not know where it is.

Manchester United: Nicknamed 'the Busby Babes', after the GPO mascot who, over the years, has done so much to help United's administrators scrape a decent team together.

Middlesbrough: Known to fans as 'Oh No, Not Them Again, Still We Might As Well Go, There'll Be Plenty Of Room', Middlesbrough generally play in front of bigger crowds than they expect. Is it worth their while improving?

Norwich: Under the guidance of notepaper tycoon John Bond, this side has grown from a tiny bulb of talent to an impressively lusty snowdrop. Watch out for its nodding head (Martin Peters) in the spring.

Notts Forest: Little is known about this mist-shrouded, brooding fortress where few spectators have dared to tread. Those who do dare, however, are among the most musical in the country, viz. theme songs: 'This Can't Be Clough Because I Feel So Well', 'Clough Makes The World Go Round', 'Falling In Love With Clough Is Falling For Make Believe'.

Southampton: The brainchild of vengeance-crazed manager Lawrie McNemesis, this appalling machine could take over the world, as far as Portsmouth. Home Ground: The Dell. Telex address: Dingdong.

Stoke City: Set in the heart of Britain's China. Frequently sat upon, shatters when thrown.

Tottenham Hotspur: Worst defence since Catherine the Great. No amount of talent (pronounced Ar-dee-lez) will keep their back four from foundering this season. Spur's priority therefore will be: buying forwards.

West Bromwich Albion: Champagne Charlies of Division One, full of youth and talent, but actually excelling thanks to efforts of well-disguised greybeards. Recent purchases from Rover's Return Rovers (see City, Manchester) maintain quality of team but not its pleasing Allsorts appearance.

Wolves: Wolves died out in this country many, many years ago, so this club has suffered somewhat in having nothing to live up to. Theme song: 'Sheep May Safely Graze'.

Jazz

Charles Fox

By the Right

The Best of Basie *French MCA* 4 LPs
Super Chief *Columbia* (American Import)
The Atomic Mr Chairman *Pye-Vogue* 2 LPs
£4.80 each
For The First Time (Count Basie Trio) *Pablo*
£5.05

'The Count always begins – *bink-bink*!' wrote Henry Miller in *The Colossus of Maroussi*. A master of excess was commending the virtues of his opposite, a musician who could be described as a minimalist. And in life, just as in art. Nobody in jazz has been less of a showman than Count Basie; nobody has behaved more effortlessly. Where Duke Ellington's languid courtesy masked quite ferocious industry, Count Basie is content to lounge unabashedly. Next Tuesday should be no different, whether it proves a working birthday or not. Count Basie's 75th year is quite likely to catch him napping.

Words, too, come forth reluctantly. Anybody who caught Basie on Oscar Peterson's TV show may remember how Oscar had to finish his anecdotes for him. Similarly problems were faced by the present writer when he tried getting Basie to pour out his life-story on tape. (By coincidence, that confrontation, *Swingin' The Blues*, will be repeated on Radio 3 in the afternoon of 26 October.) An enquiry about goings-on in Kansas City was promptly countered by a baseball metaphor: 'You don't mind if I throw a curve at you? I'm writing a book and that's material I want to keep to meself'. The book, needless to say, has been in the offing for at least 22 years.

Basie's disinclination to reminisce may partly be due to genuine modesty. Only too eager to extol Art Tatum and Oscar Peterson, even to hand out a rebuke for the suggestion that his band 'cut' Chick Webb's at the Savoy Ballroom in 1937, he greets any praise of his own piano playing with amused derision. Yet Basie's work at the keyboard was revolutionary as well as beguiling. He was the first to recognise an obvious fact: if a bassist and drummer – not to mention a guitarist too – are backing you up, why bother about your left hand? The modern jazz trio, with its precise demarcation of function, arose from that logic.

Paradoxically enough, just as Basie, the symbol of Kansas City jazz, was born – and grew up – in New Jersey, so he started out emulating the most two-handed of jazz pianists, the Harlem 'stride' players, and especially Fats Waller. Waller's influence persists (you can spot it on the 1974 Pablo LP) and was certainly to the fore when Basie, touring with a theatrical show, got stranded in Kansas City in 1927. Eight years later he was the bandleader at the Reno Club, working seven nights a week from 9 pm to 5 am – except Sundays, when the Breakfast Dance stretched things out until 10am or noon. Each musician received 18 dollars for what amounted to 60 hours on the stand, not counting after-hours jamming.

That was the band – it included, incidentally, a resident genuis in the tenor saxophonist, Lester Young – which flopped at Chicago's Grand Terrace (they messed up the *Poet and Peasant* Overture, needed for the floor show) before making their mark on jazz history at a tiny New York club, The Famous Door. What startled local musicians as much as anything was the rhythm section (Basie, Freddie Green, Walter Page, Jo Jones), redefining what could be done with four equal beats to the bar. Music from that period is to be found in the MCA boxed set, 60 tracks recorded between 1937 and 1939 (no standard British release is available at the moment, but alternative – and smaller – selections can be found on German and US MCA imports).

The band played plenty of blues and it swung lissomly as a small group. Many of the pieces were 'head' arrangements, connected on the stand rather than scored by anybody in particular. Much use was made of riffs, short phrases repeated again and again. By the time the majority of tracks on *Super Chief* were recorded, however, the orchestrations had become more formal, more elaborate. Bit by bit, the original pattern got reversed. *The Atomic Mr Chairman*, dating from 1957 and 1958, has worthy soloists – Joe Newman,

Christopher Reid

Pastoral

The barmaid apple-picks
her glasses off the rack.
She pumps and pumps for beer –
a thin pizzle-dribble.
Only a quarter past six,
and business is still slack
in this London country pub,
where the only customer
apart from us
is an old military dandy
of the most cultivated sort.
Spruce in his Seurat tweed
and fresh graphpaper shirt,
he douses his double brandy
with a brief siphon-snort,
then sets to wooing the barmaid
over her no-man's-counter
with forays of cavalier banter.
A hanky swells from his pocket
to tell her his heart overflows,
but he might as well dally for windfalls
from the fruit-machine
for all the interest she shows.
Her white hair is blue –
a bland, Impressionist cloud –
and next to the empty beer-crates
lives a poodle, topiaried,
that the old gentleman hates.
Bottles hang upside-down,
their spirits sinking
at so much heavy drinking,
while tankards, pot-bellied, on hooks,
are lords of the air and as free
as a flight of sitting-room ducks.

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Frank Foster, Lockjaw Davis – but nobody in the class of Lester Young or the trombonist Dicky Wells. On the other hand, immaculate ensemble playing replaced the old-time roughness, with arrangers exploiting Basie's fondness for moving abruptly from *ppp* to *fff*. And 'Li'l Darlin'' demonstrated that the band could now swing at a tempo scarcely faster than a crawl.

The MCA set contains a quartet version of 'How Long Blues', a beautifully simple example of Basie's piano playing, about as concise as music can hope to be. A similar command of basics, especially of the difference that accenting or musical punctuation can make to a familiar phrase is to be found on 'For The First Time', recorded nearly 40 years later, with Basie flanked by Ray Brown (bass) and Louie Bellson (drums).

Contrary to popular notions, musicians often seen to thrive on the jazz life. Bill Coleman and Jess Stacy were 75 the other day, while Earl Hines made it last Christmas. And all, except Stacy, still play for a living. Count Basie's band, of course, was performing for diners at the Grosvenor House Hotel only the other week; all very different, no doubt, from those Breakfast Dances at the Reno Club. But so were the musical priorities. Tradition was being respected rather than revised, although the tradition happened to be one created by the Count and his erstwhile colleagues. And at least a portion of it involved the leader – smiling, cherubic, looking like a specially shiny Buddha – keeping faith with Henry Miller and going *bink-bink!*

Films

John Coleman

Me!

Quadrophenia (X) *Plaza 1*
Elvis – The Movie (U) *Classic, Haymarket; Studio, Oxford Street; Scene; ABCs Bayswater, Fulham and Edgware Roads*
Norma Rae (AA) *Studio, Oxford Street; Cinecenta; Odeons, Kensington, Swiss Cottage and Westbourne Grove*

Some five years ago, The Who made a double album, *Quadrophenia*, which (like their earlier *Tommy*) was a sequence of songs telling a story and (again like *Tommy*) has now turned up as a film. But any resemblance between Ken Russell's wild party of the first part and Franc Roddam's debut as a director for the big screen ends there. Roddam will be better known as the man who did such fine and controversial items as *The Family* and, more recently, the shattering *Dummy* for TV: henceforth he should be hailed as the bright, confident talent, still in his early thirties, who did his damnedest with *Quadrophenia*. Time for me to make my usual confession: I have not heard The Who's album and, after having just come form the movie, am almost as much in the aural dark as to its contents. Film companies should really provide a libretto and a pocket torch for pop-ignorant reviewers, especially where the words of songs – one suspects – are often furthering a plot, sometimes ironically commenting upon it. But if The Who are The What to some ears, they are to be congratulated for putting their money where their mouths are, that is, into a British film, British-acted, British-crewed, British-produced, and all about a thoroughly British phenomenon: the Mods and Rockers of more than a decade ago and, specifically, events leading up to and away from the Bank Holiday battle of Brighton in 1964. Roddam's feature, scripted by him, Dave Humphries and Martin Stellman, is not just full of sound; it is full of marvellously orchestrated fury, too, signifying something.

If not much. The larger meaning presumably coheres around Jimmy, a Mod kid with a loathed job as post-boy in an ad agency, a cherished Lambretta, a penchant for pill-popping, a sharp dress sense, and nowhere to go but down. 'Can You See the Real Me?', comes off the fortissimo track, and 'Me!' he howls near the equivocal end, in echo. It says a lot for the performance of Phil Daniels as Jimmy, slight, wan-faced, foul-mouthed, a would-be swinger wanking off to photographs somewhere in Shepherd's Bush, vacillating crazily between elation and hysterical despair, that one cares at all for this vacuous thrill-seeker with a boring old identity problem. But then the performances are uniformly well found: Roddam has assembled a cast of believable street-teenagers (Mark Wingett, Philip Davis, Raymond Winstone, Gary Shail, and Leslie Ash as promiscuous 'Steph', with whom Jimmy has a quick wall-poke during the Brighton rumble); orchestrated their ensemble playing down to the last, wearying 'Fuck off!'; got it all happening in mostly right-looking hectic, seedy, false-flash Sixties locations. The nastiness at the seaside when the 'poufs' and 'grease-monkeys' clash is perhaps too convincing for comfort. (Will Life Copy Art? Cf. *The Warriors* in the States and watch your local tabloid in the weeks to come.)

Nice touches include Jimmy puking his heart up in the Gents at work while two executives chat blandly across him, the disastrous meeting with Kev, an old pal who turns out to be a Rocker, a typical Saturday night party-crashing with even the bath full of threshing limbs, and (maybe) the discovery that the preening Mod, Ace, is only a Brighton bellboy. Clumsy moments, of which there are too many, would surely take in some nudging dialogue. 'We're all the same under the skin,' says Kev, in answer to Jimmy's prophetic, 'You got to be somebody, ain't you, or you might as well jump in the sea and drown?' Ah, yes, we nod – Jimmy's odd man out, the one who stretches a group-fad into a total life-style and inevitably comes a cropper, chucking in his job and certainly a stolen scooter, possibly himself with it, off a cliff. (Black mark, incidentally, for all those tell-tale – Take Nine? – bike-tracks by the cliff's edge.) In fact, there would have been far more Jimmies in the group. Delivered to us as a special scapegoat (his boozy dad improbably bawls him out as 'schizophrenic' and the whole excursion endorses this grandness), he is present as a useful moral cop-out. Implication: the rest are just a bit evil at weekends. But next, please, Mr Roddam.

John (*Dark Star*, *Assault on Precinct 13*) Carpenter is a cult director and the late Presley was a cult performer. *Elvis – The Movie* is, nevertheless, two hours of uninformed and uninforming tedium. So he loved his mother (Shelley Winters). Pat Hingle as Colonel Tom Parker, all smiles round a ceegar, disappears at half time. Kurt Russell has the right hair for Elvis but very mean little eyes. Pop goes that weasel. Martin Ritt's well-intended *Norma Rae* is a modern melodrama about unionism. Set in a bigoted Southern textile township, it looks splendid ('real', amateur faces; great location work) and gives the faintly eerie Sally Field a hugely charming role as the titular heroine, a young layabout mother brought to social consciousness by a hugely charming labour organiser (Ron Leibman). Miss Field got Best Actress at Cannes.

Dance

Bryan Robertson

Walking Tall

Dance Theatre of Harlem *Sadler's Wells until 18 August*

The Dance Theatre of Harlem, currently performing to packed and noisily enthusiastic audiences, is a brilliantly gifted all-black company that has established an authority with quite exceptional speed within its first decade of existence. Last seen here in 1976, the company is popular everywhere it travels and held in high esteem in its native New York – where it has to fight for attention among the most dense concentration of dance companies in the world. Its success is undoubtedly due to the principles and discipline established by its Director, Arthur Mitchell, a Balanchine-trained dancer and a great performer in his day with the New York City Ballet. Mitchell created the Dance Theatre when a new school for black dancers and musicians in the violent wasteland of Harlem began to overflow with talent within a few years of its inception, at the end of the troubled Sixties.

There is nothing so extraordinary in the idea of an all-black dance group: we are used, for example, to the astute mixture of serious ethnic or folk-rooted modern dance and high-leaping jazzy numbers offered by the Alvin Ailey Dance Company on their visits to London. But black dancers, like any other black artists, have to face special problems of employment. Only a very small number of black dancers can be absorbed within the fiercely competitive ranks of the existing white dance companies, which often have their own training schools. It is sometimes difficult to mix black dancers with white performers, unless they have the dramatic isolation of a star performer. There is also the economic pull of the commercial showbiz world, or what is spasmodically left of it either on or off Broadway, and the lure of better and more steady employment as part of a team of dancers on TV.

What is remarkable about the Dance Theatre of Harlem is the way in which a handful of characteristic works by Balanchine, in his finest neo-classical vein, have been retained as a kind of cornerstone for the repertoire. It is these ballets which give the

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company its special presence and style – from the classical training that makes their performance possible. In this direction, Mitchell has given the company a distinctive identity and developed the technical resources of his dancers to their fullest extent.

Four famous ballets by Balanchine were included in last week's repertoire: the very early *Serenade* of 1934, using Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings*; *The Four Temperaments* of 1946, which has one of Hindemith's liveliest and most melodic neo-classical scores; *Allegro Brillante* of 1956, that employs Tchaikovsky's light-weight, but sparkling and eminently theatrical music to fine effect; and *Agon*, 1957, arguably still the greatest of all the Balanchine ballets, in which Stravinsky's astringently clear, open and springy score is perfectly matched by Balanchine's edgily tactful manipulation of 12 dancers – eight girls and four boys. *Serenade* and *Allegro Brillante* were rather predictable in their tight adherence to a drily expressed 'grand manner' aspect of classical dance. *The Four Temperaments* is danced by several other companies and still seems inventive in range: its four main sections are 'melancholic', 'sanguinic', 'phlegmatic', and 'choleric'. Balanchine's essays in athletically expressed contrasts in mood retain their wit and freshness. But *Agon*, loosely based on a contest of court dances, in plain black and white costumes without sets, is a masterpiece, rare in modern dance, and its disarming mixture of cheekiness and crisp solemnity brings a new dimension to the tradition of classical dance.

These ballets, though uneven, all depend upon a special balance between athletic power and extreme restraint: the Harlem dancers, tall and fast, perform them superbly. The disappointment so far is in the vapid and cheap nature of the other ballets presented in London. *Troy Games*, Robert North's send-up of machismo which mocks camp itself, is still amusing if somewhat protracted, but *Dougla*, a vulgar travel-poster of pseudo-ethnic hip swinging and aimless leaping around, has no place in this dignified and witty company's scheme of things. But the fun-ballets bring the house down and artistic policy decisions for the future cannot be easy.

Weekend Competition

No 2579 **Set by Al Dente**

Twelve lines of rhymed verse, please, with each line containing one of the following words: *trifle, leggy, sunburn, bellowing, objet, thoughtful, referee, polaroid, fly, accordingly, collage* and *Wordsworth*. By 31 August.

Result of No 2576 Set by Perry Neaham

We asked for apposite anagrams of the names of painters or composers.

Report **by Little Keith**

So Roy Kelly doesn't like anagrams – 'the one comp I have to force myself to do'. So listen, Roy, we don't set these comps for your *pleasure*: don't run away with that idea. Cracking your teeth on a Fat Jeff special is meant to improve your mind, not cosset your senses: forcing yourself is what it's all about. No cash for the Kelly household this week. Otherwise, a talented set of offerings, and a special prize (*pace* Joyce Johnson) of three pounds to John J. Swift, who anagrammed all his five permitted artists at once: Kurt Schwitters, Man Ray, Giorgio de Chirico, René Magritte and Salvador Dali come out as: 'I stick whatever torn litter comes; in a hard, grim, glorious rage, I cry "Dada!"' We're pleased, by the way, that no one tried to sneak past us André Breton's famous anagram on Salvador Dali: Avidadollars. Just as well. A near miss for one of John Fuller's entries: 'Maurice Ravel' can be turned very suitably into 'La rêve, M. Auric'. Apposite indeed. Only trouble is, it's *le* rêve. Unlucky. By the way, there are still two Routledge *DBQ*'s to come.

Piet Mondrian: I paint modern. IAN WILSON

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec: I call our outré nudes 'Thee'. TIM HOPKINS

Karl-Heinz Stockhausen: Kraut shock: Henze slain!
IAN HAMILTON & JOHN FULLER

Pierre Boulez: Prize rebel? Oú?? JOHN FULLER

Gordon Crosse: Cor, God snores!
IAN HAMILTON

Thomas Arne: Ornate sham. J. T. NEWHAM

Mozart: Mr. A to Z.
William Etty: Tit? May I? Well . . .
CHARLES PLOUVIEZ

James Abbott McNeill Whistler: Battle – Mr. Jim won the case – bills!
Giovanni Tiepolo: O I love Painting O!
Michelangelo Buonarroti: A mural, one ceiling – or both? JOYCE JOHNSON

Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Those blander old hymns!
A. J. WYBORN

R. Leoncavallo: A lover on call.
KATE SHORT

Monteverdi: Verdi? Not me. BRIAN LEVISON

Henri Matisse: See, art's in him.
ALASTAIR CHAMBRE

Camille Saint-Saens: Enlists animal aces.
TED THOMPSON

Sir Peter Paul Rubens: Superb painter rules.
Pietro Mascagni: Isn't opera magic?
JAMES MICHIE

Edward Burne-Jones: Job: drew near-nudes.
BILL GREENWELL

Amedeo Modigliani: Do I imagine a model?
FRANK ANDERSON

Serge Rachmaninoff: *ff* sacharine-monger.
Leonard Bernstein: Len's a born trendie.
Karl-Heinz Stockhausen: Noise, crash – hate . . klunk . . . z . . . JONATHAN BURTON

Edgar Varese: Av-garde seer. JOE HANDY

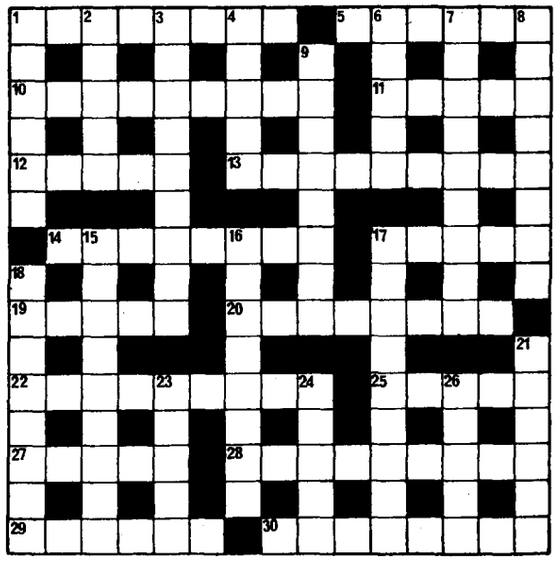
Pierre Auguste Renoir: Ee! Our ripe ungirt arse!
TOM DONNELLY

Bela Bartok: Babel art, OK?
Gustav Mahler: Vulgah master!
JIM ANTHONY

The chess column has been held over.

Weekend Crossword 1313

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1313, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 28 August.



ACROSS

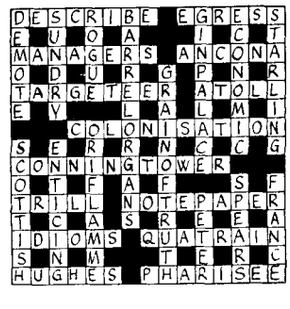
1 A number die in the Serpentine? (8).
5 Caught with intimate friend, seen in a field (6).
10 Missile is not finished by admiral, so duck (9).
11 Place for two learners (5).
12 Incur changes in writing (5).
13 Renew post by using paper on it (9).
14 Plundered when the remedy got out of date (8).
17 Man back in the open air breathing freely (5).
19 'The —, vast, and wandering air' (*K. Richard III*) (5).
20 An animal surrounded by a crowd in the wood (8).
22 Powerful rich man caught between god and animal (9).
25 Bird man in small part (5).
27 Grip's owner (5).
28 Gentleman without degree gives visitor nothing (9).
29 'Jealous in honour, — and quick in quarrel' (*AYLI*) (6).
30 Flowers for a champion about to retire (8).

DOWN

1 Part of church exceptionally including a saint (6).
2 With a change of heart this song would do for a heathen (5).
3 By thoroughgoing measures put bitterness back into the meeting (9).
4 As a means of going up I get in the best player (5).
6 Relax like the French on an animal (3, 2).
7 Colour of liquid held up by rats (9).
8 Connecting a story up in the circle (8).
9 The gallery gives a girl an unusual hand (8).
15 Confiscated some money in change for a dime (9).
16 Plane climbs and there is sign of breaking up — what an ill-made thing! (8).
17 Game in which a pretty girl holds an article with a label upside down (9).
18 Boat which takes a Nazi round a country (8).
21 Animal holds little bit up found in stomach (6).
23 The fat are to be seen without number (5).
24 I enter a piece got up as a bone (5).
26 Cloth flower? (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1311



Prizewinners to No 1311

Guy Pearce (Crawley)
H. McGrittie (London SW18)
Mrs T. Brodetsky (Kidlington)

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A good general educational background and a fundamental understanding of the labour and trade union movement and sympathy with its aims are essential qualifications for the post.

The salary scale is £7,790 plus £363 Outer London Weighting rising by two increments to £8,260 plus £363 Outer London Weighting (under review). Further details and application form can be obtained from: **The General Secretary, Post Office Engineering Union, 150 Brunswick Road, Ealing, London W5 1AW (Telephone 01-998 2981).** Closing date for the receipt of completed application forms will be the first post on **Friday 31 August 1979.**

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As the Society is concerned as well with the needs of the handicapped generally, and its sphere of influence is considerable, the successful applicant must be able to show a proven track record in the journalist field, and preferably have daily newspaper experience. He/she must also have initiative and enterprise in searching out and following up stories of interest to the media, and be able to present all material, whether in press release or leaflet form, with lively accuracy. Some administrative experience would be helpful.

This is a demanding, challenging, permanent and pensionable position with an attractive salary for the right applicant.

Applications together with C.V. to: **Controller of Personnel, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020.**

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requires a

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

The candidate should have the ability to undertake a wide range of work in industrial relations and will be expected to keep abreast of current developments in collective bargaining.

The ability to handle one or more of the following disciplines is required: Labour and Industrial Economics; Statistics; Accountancy; Industrial Relations.

The appointment will be for one year and the annual salary will be in the range £3,689-£5,321. Further details can be obtained from: **Robin Beddoe, Trade Union Research Unit, Ruskin College, Oxford.**

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The successful candidate will be responsible to the Head of Current Affairs. The responsibilities will include budgetary control within the department; contracting of artistes and freelance staff; authorisation of overseas travel expenses and day-to-day operation of company policy and procedures. The job involves contact with personnel at all levels.

Proven administration competence is essential, a knowledge of television production would be a distinct advantage. This position will be of interest to people earning around £9,000 per annum. Generous benefits one would normally associate with a leading TV company.

Suitably qualified applicants, male or female, should write enclosing curriculum vitae to: The Senior Staff Relations Officer, Thames Television Limited, 306 Euston Road, London NW1 to arrive not later than 27th August, 1979.

THAMES
LONDON'S WEEKDAY ITV

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MONTHLY BUSINESS MAGAZINE COVERING THE MIDDLE EAST SEEKS AN ASSISTANT EDITOR.

Candidate should have experience of business reporting and general sub-editing. Knowledge of Mid East, layout, design and second language desirable.

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Please contact the Secretary for further information at:

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Applications should be returned by 1st post 31st August.

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Accountant/Administrator

Write or phone for details to: **NKLC, 74 Golborne Road, London W10. Tel: 01-969 7473.** The closing date for applications will be **7 Sept.**

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RESEARCH ASSISTANT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY

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UNIVERSITY OF LANCASTER

INSTITUTE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

SELF-ACCESS MATERIALS FOR *ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING*

Applications are invited for the above post in the Institute for English Language Education at the University to assist with the development of a package of self-study materials to meet the needs of students attending English Language courses. A limited amount of teaching (to 6 hours per week) will also be required.

Applicants should be qualified and experienced teachers with particular expertise in designing materials and, ideally, in teaching tertiary-level students. Experience in the organisation of multi-media learning resources would be an additional advantage.

The post will begin as soon as possible and will be for a fixed term of one year.

Commencing salary will be within the range £4,622-£5,488 dependent on age, qualifications and experience.

Further particulars may be obtained (quoting reference L155/D) from the Establishment Officer, University House, Bailrigg, Lancaster LA1 4YW to whom applications (6 copies) naming three referees, should be sent not later than 7 September 1979.

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES—JAMAICA

Applications are invited for the post of

DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Candidates should have had experience in University teaching. Professional media experience is essential, and Caribbean experience is highly desirable. A post-graduate degree or research experience in communication is desirable, but not essential. The Director should be competent to teach communication theory and/or media production courses, and should have an interest in the educational uses of communication and its relation to the development process. The Director's interests should also reflect broad interdisciplinary understanding of communication including both mass and interpersonal channels. Appointment will be in the grade of Professor or Senior Lecturer. Salary scales: Professor: 1979/80 — J$20,770 — 25,714 p.a. 1980/81 — J$22,848 — 28,284 p.a. Senior Lecturer: 1979/80 — J$15,489 — 20,559 p.a. 1980/81 — J$17,748 — 22,848 p.a. (£1 sterling = TT$5.55). Family passages; baggage allowance; FSSU; study and travel grant; unfurnished accommodation will be let by the University at a rental of 10% of salary, or a housing allowance of 20% of salary will be paid. Detailed application (2 copies) with curriculum vitae and naming 3 referees should be sent to The Registrar, University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston 7, Jamaica, as soon as possible. Applicants resident in the UK should send one copy to the Inter-University Council, 90/91 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0DT. Further details may be obtained from either address.

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Salary: $A16,291-$21,401

Further information and application forms are available from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Appts), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF. Applications close with the Staff Officer, La Trobe University, Bundoora, 3083, Australia on 24 September 1979.

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Meetings

'REGIONAL POLICY—The Tory Challenge', Weekend School, Liverpool, 7-9 September. Director David Blake of 'The Times'. Full details: Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth St, SW1. 222 8877. Early booking essential.

ICA EVENTS, The Mall, SW1. 21 Aug. 7.30 'Japan City: Splintered Time & Space' Chris Fawcett. A talk accomp. 'Japanese Photography Today' 22 Aug. 7.30 'The Family: Big Business & the Third World' presented by Kate Young, Noeleen Heyzer, Maureen Mackintosh. 80p. 930 6393.

KRISHNAMURTI, the well-known revolutionary religious speaker and educator, will be holding public talks and discussion meetings at Brockwood Park Educational Centre, Bramdean, near Alresford, Hants, at 11.30 a.m. on 25, 26, 28, 30 August, and 1 and 2 September. No tickets needed. For details of train and coach arrangements from London please phone Bramdean 228.

WHAT IS THEOSOPHY? S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

Unions' rôle in Voluntary/ Community Organisations.

(housing associations, youth work, community industry, NACRO etc). ASTMS sponsored. Sat. 22 Sept. Liverpool. Beds, crêche etc. Contact: **Miranda, 31 Cheltenham Avenue, Liverpool L17 2AR. 051-733 2214 home, 051-207 2916 work.**

'THE CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP IN ISLAM'

A seminar by **Dr A. Ezzati, University of Tehran, Iran, Saturday, 1 September 1979, 3.30 p.m.** at the Muslim Institute.

More details from:

The Muslim Institute
6 Endsleigh Street
London WC1H 0DS

Cinema

SCREEN ON THE HILL. 435 3366 (opp. Belsize Park Tube). 'Fedora' (A). 2.45, 4.50, 7.0, 9.10 daily.

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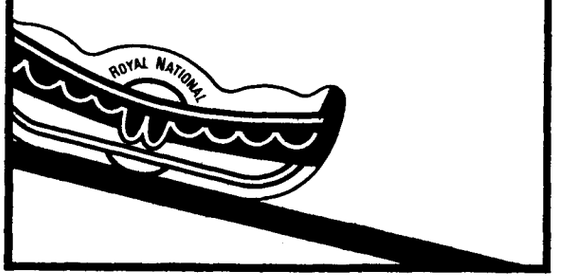

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